Tamil Arasu

SEPTEMBER 1978 50 P.

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

LET US ABOLISH ALCOHOLIC DRINKS TO USHER IN HAPPINESS

It appears that there can be no greater evil
in the world, than the seggregation
of Harijans in India.
We will be paying our debt
of gratitude to Mahatma Gandhi
by eradicating this evil.

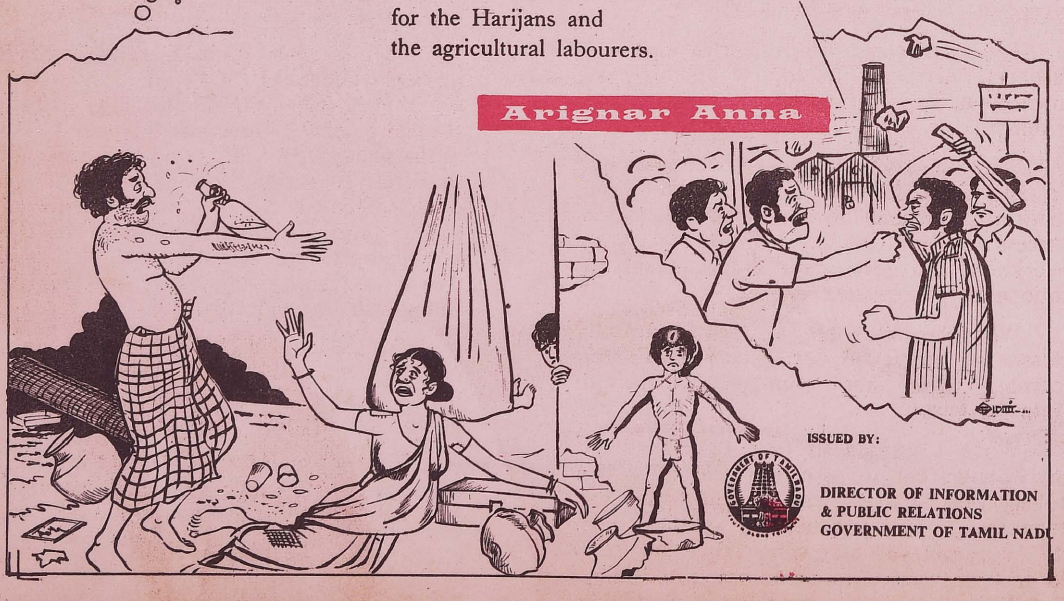
***

Alcohol destroys our body, our character
and our wisdom.
Diseases like malaria affect only the body
Alcohol and drugs destroy
the soul as well as the body.

Mahatma Gandhi

If there is no prohibition
there is no salvation
for the Harijans and
the agricultural labourers.

Arignar Anna



ISSUED BY:

DIRECTOR OF INFORMATION
& PUBLIC RELATIONS
GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

PERIYAR-

THE FIRST PROFESSOR OF TAMIL NADU

—ANNA

Many years ago I wrote an article for 'Dravidanadu' Annual Number. When I wrote about the poets and professors of various countries in that article, I referred to Periar (E.V. Ramasami) as "the first professor of Tamil Nadu".

His services to society are indeed great. The people of the country have not attained intellectual fertility to such an extent as to accept his ideas and ideals.

The growth of a crop depends upon the fertility of the soil. Likewise people of good intellectual capacity only can grasp and foster his ideas and ideals.

We cannot say that his service does not do any good. After his forty years social service, intellectual revolution has achieved success in Tamil Nadu. None can deny it. We know well how powerful and potent his rationalist propaganda is.

When he began his propaganda, certain classes of people were considered unfit for learning. Even those poor people believed it to be true.

When I wanted to take economics for my honours course, a certin lecturer in my college said to me, "Why do you aspire for economics? Can you become well versed in it? Why not you take some other subject?" In fact he wanted to damp my enthusiasm. But I took economics and got a creditable pass in it.

Fifty Years Service

When I assumed charge of the Government after thirty six years, I realised how my study of economics was very useful to me. The backward community was suppressed by showing false reasons. Now people belonging to that community occupy high positions and posts in all walks of life which should increase further. No doubt, this is due to the ceaseless services of Periyar for half-a-century.

I am ready to propagate and implement the ideas and ideals of Periar. The question is: "Shall I do some useful things assuming the charge of the Government or shall I do it at the social level with you?" I leave it to to Periar to decide. If he says, "Well, my disciple depart and do it", I am ever prepared for it. Still his ideas and ideals have not been completely put into practice. Of course, it will take many years to carry them out. But it will be implemented.

The service that Periar has taken up is a laudable service. The country needs his most useful service. Periar only has that rare ability to do it.

We must give him rest or we must carry on his duty. But both our fields are different. But each of them is as important as the other.

Teacher's Role

The literacy of our country is said to be 40%. It is only a customary remark.

If a boy discontinues his studies at 4th standard, it is a loss to the Government. It was said that much was lost in private management schools. The Tamil Nadu Government is aware of it. We are exploring the ways and means to set it righy. Soon we have to take a decision about it.

Teachers should have high mental calibre. They should give their students the best possible ideas. If they do so, we can derive three fourths of the benefit-though not the entire benefit for the money we spend on education.

If the teachers teach their students with a rationalist approach we can make our students compete with their counterparts in the other parts of the world in the intellectual field within ten years.

Rationalist Propaganda

The education that we give to our students in schools and colleges is theoretically useful to them, when they leave the institution. It is not useful to them either rationally or practically later in life. Schools should do the propaganda of learning whereas Periar should carry on the rationalist propaganda. Only with these two things we can reform society.

Our present curriculum should be completely changed. The educational experts should give serious thought to it and they should evolve a new curriculum accordingly.

Society cannot be completely changed by Government alone. The Government has not that mighty power. Though a Government is given to me, it cannot act independently. There is a big Government above to control it.

In any country of the world, society is reformed more by individual social reformers than by the people running Government. Because of the untiring efforts of Periar and because of his rationalist ideas our society is registering remarkable progress.

Gold is not obtained in bars, immediately after the earth is dug. After so many hardships, the glittering gold is got. Just like that the task of social reforms has many obstacles to overcome.

(Speech delivered by Anna on December 19, 1967 while declaring open the Periyar Ramasamy Educational building.)

PERIYAR COMMEMORATIVE STAMP

The Government of Tamil Nadu requested the Union Government to release a postal stamp in memory of the "morning star of reformation", the great rationalist leader Periyar E. V. Ramasami. The Government of India have signified their concurrence to this request. The Periyar commemorative stamp is to be released on September 17, 1978, at Erode, synchronising with the centenary of Periyar.

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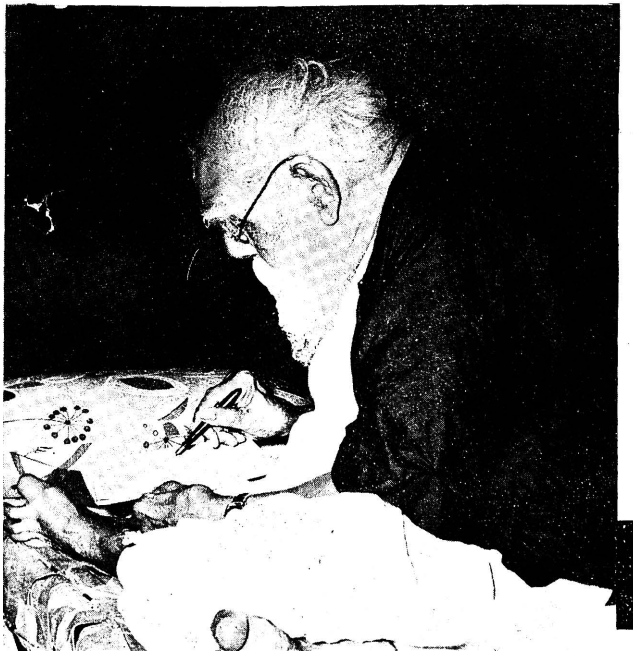
THANTHAI PERIYAR— Our Messiah



M. G. RAMACHANDRAN,
Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

'Periyar' is not the name of an individual. It is a chronicle of hundred years of a country and a unique Philosophy of human society.

Among millions who are born in this world only a few attain such historical glory and depart this world leaving imprint of the philosophy of life. Tamil Nadu had the unique and rare privilege of being the birth place of Periyar. Poet Bharathi said "Tamilnadu's glory reached the heights of the sky by giving Valluvan to the world." In the same Tamil soil was born Thanthai Periyar (Reverential Father), the unmatched thinker of twentieth century, the freedom fighter, and the shimmering rationalist and the builder of a new era.

Unfortunately, he was not understood by the world as much as he should have been because he was born in Tamil Nadu. Strangely, the sub-continent of India has not yet fully understood the personality of Periyar. Instead of saying he was not fully understood, it may be stated that his name was camouflaged purposely. Yet, they could not succeed to exterminate or camouflage his skill and calibre, his untelligence and the philosophy he expounded.

New Awakening

I want to announce that the Government of Tamil Nadu and the people in this State have planned to actively make an endeavour to help the world understand the full and rich personality of Periyar, the brilliant moon that appeared on the sky of darkness to awaken Tamil Nadu from its long slumber.

Had he considered that the harvest in political life was only occupying high Government offices, he could have been known more throughout India; he, would have been more popular and his fame would have reached new heights. But he converted his life a battle field and he remained till his last breath a warrior fighting social tyranny and injustice.

A Born Leader

Periyar was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He began his public life through the Municipality which was then the prerogative of the wealthy. When he was drawn to politics he joined the national struggle as a fearless freedom fighter. In all the fields of agitation and struggle and strife, he played commander of the forces. **Yes, Periyar was a born leader.**

Periyar rose in revolt against those self-centred, narrow-minded, the crafty and tricksy men who, in the midst of the torrential flood of the national movement carrying away the loyal workers, captured a place and misused the position for personal ends. He was up in arms to fight the evils, and emitted fire.

Periyar was not the breeze, embracing the soft body; he was a whirlwind. He was not like the gentle brook running through the vendurous forests; he was the roaring Ganga; he was not the silver-snow-clad cliff of dazzling beauty; but a rupturous volcano.

He was born a Siddhartha; but never turned to be the Buddha. He became a warrior; launched battles to fight and eradicate social injustice and evils. He declared that it was cowardice to be afraid of the social atrocities and heinous to escape from them. Periyar has created a *heroic history covering in itself a period of hundred years.*

Fight against Caste System

He thundered that atrocities and injustice-be they in administration or politics or in social and personal life—should be fought and rooted out. When he came to understand that the caste system, religious beliefs and superstition form the foundation of all social evils and injustice he waged a valiant and ceaseless battle to fight and destroy the very foundation.

Periyar was a life long fighter. He never thought of any personal gain through his endeavours; he was never at the beck and call of any one. Tamil Nadu was always uppermost in his mind; he always thought of Tamil people. He always cared for human beings.

His Mission

His mission was no easy task. He came across hills and forests. The methods he adopted were akin to blasting the rock and clearing the bushes and shrubs to create a fertile field. Many were aghast at such measures of his. But today we are raising the mansion after he laid the foundation. We have commenced our journey only after he paved the way.

Yet, he did not want to stay and rest on his oars. He had no ambition to have a happy sojourn on the path he paved. He gave new life to the saying of yore: "My duty is service" He stood an example of it.

We tremble at the question. 'If Periyar were not born?" We would not have been blessed with Anna if there was no Periyar. Tamil Nadu would never have seen the light of the day, if there were no Periyar and Perarignar Anna.

Saviour

Today we rejoice in Tamil language, Tamil society and Tamil Nadu. These would have fallen into oblivion like the dream of a dumb. The flood of freedom movement would have carried them away with no trace of Tamil language and race, culture and art.

"Sweet Honey drops thump on ears
When the name of 'Pristine Tamil Nadu' is uttered"

"Of all the tongues that I have sampled
For sweetness Tamil is unexampled"

"Even before rock and soil - appeared
was born the Tamil, the first human"

Such literary heritage of pride would have dissipated in the air and disappeared with passage of time. That is why, Perarignar Anna, on assumption of office as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu in 1967, announced, with all humility and gratitude "*I dedicate this Government to Periyar*"

Six Decades of Service

"To save such glory and traditions, Periyar worked and struggled for over sixty years. *A victorious warrior of that struggle, Periyar still lives as "King of white beard"* The centenary of that mighty maker of an epoch, father of a philosophy and silvery star of rationalism is being inaugurated on September 17 this year. Tamil Nadu has a plan to celebrate the centenary of Periyar who fought throughout his life.

Ideals of Periyar

The Government of Tamil Nadu which was dedicated to Periyar by Perarignar Anna and the present Government of Anna have decided to organise official functions throughout the year. We will not stop with functions alone. We are engaged now in translating the ideals of Periyar to usher in a casteless, secular and socialist social order. On behalf of the Government of Tamil Nadu I dedicate this programme to *Thanthai Periyar* (Reverential Father)

PERIYAR—OUR SAVIOUR

Caste system has been harming our nation. It is caste system that has segregated millions and millions of people and held them in degradation. Periyar Ramaswami has been fighting valiantly against caste system to eradicate it root and branch. For over half-a-century, he has been fighting social evils. He has won laurels in many a battle field. He is a Saviour.

—Babuji JAGJIVAN RAM

PERIYAR E. V. RAMASAMI - HIS LIFE AND MISSION

Thiru E. V. Ramasami Naicker whom people affectionately call Thanthai Periyar (reverential father) was born on September 17, 1879 at Erode, Coimbatore District. His father Venkatappa Naicker was very popular as an affluent trader of good reputation. The young Ramasami was not destined to confine himself within the walls of a school. He was a truant, and he mingled and moved with boys belonging to Vaniya Chetti and Vedagara communities which were regarded inferior in status and cultural outlook. He was inquisitive, trying to learn and study men and matters in experience instead of books.

He was married at the age of 19. His young wife, aged 13 found it difficulty to adjust herself with the unorthodox husband who wanted spicy non-vegetarian dishes even on those 'prohibited' days in conservative Hindu families. Young Ramasami studied religion, mythology and Tamil literature with avid interest. His father did not like the way in which his son conducted himself in social life. E. V. Ramasami left Erode without the knowledge of his family, and wandered lonely as a mendicant in North India. He visited Calcutta and Benaras. .E. V. Ramasamy was peramulating, and, his wander from pillar to post, from *Ashram* to *Ashram* gave him no consolation. Much to his disappointment he was driven out from religious mutts because he was a Non-Brahmin. He was penniless, and he had to starve for days together. He returned home, wiser of worldly affairs and not a prodigal son. The business of his father in chillies, turmeric and tamarind etc was earning his family riches.

E. V. Ramasami took keen interest in public affairs, particularly the civic administration. To be precise, he entered public life in 1915 and Taluk Board attracted him. He was associated with the Madras Presidency Association (MPA) founded in 1917. The national struggle for freedom under the aegis of Mahatma Gandhi provided a better opportunity to E. V. Ramasami to serve the people and the nation. "As the Congress held views similar to his own social reform, he thought that by joining that political organisation he would bring about a new social order in the Presidency of Madras."

Interest in Public Life

While he was still undecided whether or not to joint the Congress, two persons influenced him to come to a decision. One was C. Rajagopalachari and the other was Dr. P. Varadharajulu, a Balija like himself. Both of them urged him to join the Congress not merely to achieve political independence for the country but to fight the social inequality prevalent in society. Ultimately on Rajaji's advice, Naicker decided to join the Congress towards the end of 1919.

As a Congress man, E. V. Ramasami identified himself with the programmes of Prohibition, Khadi and removal of untouchability. The social philosophy had in it much appeal to him. He carried the sack-like coarse Khadi cloth on his shoulders to sell them in villages, along with his comrades. Kovai A. Ayyamuthu, compatriot of E. V. Ramasami speaks volumes of the Khadi promotional efforts of E. V Ramasami. E. V. Ramasami was the founder-President of Tamil Nadu Khadi Board, and K. Santhanam was his Secretary.

Periyar had the lust for human right and equality. He closely watched the domination of Congress affairs by one section. He resented the prerogaties and privileges in the social organisation on the basis of birth. He was no respector of the mythological definition of sociology and had scant—respect for Hindu Puranic exposition of human life.

The Gurukulam at Shermadevi, founded by V. V. S. Iyer, a patriot and Editor of 'Deshabakthan', in Tirunelveli district, gave preferencial treatment to Brahmin boys and the Non-Brahmins were discriminated, much to the chagrin of parents and Congress men. Periyar took up this matter with the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee and wanted the Congress to stop grant to the Astramam The concept of Varnashrama Dharma, as expounded by Gandhi, created a crevice in the Congress in Tamil Nadu for, it gave a convenient handle to the Brahmins to perpetuate their hegemony over religion and social life. Periyar was frank and outspoken in this matter and he opposed Gandhi on this subject. Leading Congressmen like R. K. Shanmugha Chetti and Dr. P. Varadharajulu Naidu were unhappy over the principle of Varnashrama Dharma.

Kancheepuram Conference

The third event that finally made Periyar break away from Congress happened in 1925. The then Tamil Nadu Congress President was Thiru Vi. Kalyanasundaram, a noted Tamil Scholar who gave new colour to Tamil journalism. Periyar had been demanding representation in public services and representative bodies for Non-Brahmins. In his "Kudiyarasu" ('Democracy') he made a strong plea. He also wanted "the popular representatives going to the Kancheepuram Conference not to be caught in the "hands

of the treacherous and selfish class of persons who deceive the public by their machinations, enlarging their wily shares and turn everything to their advantage by standing in the forefront in every matter." His two resolutions before the Conference were disallowed by the Chairman, Thiru-V-Kalyanasundaram Mudaliar, on the good that they had already been rejected by the Subject Committee. Periyar and several others walked out. And by the end of 1925 Periyar had left Congress to form an organisation of his own.

Self-Respect Movement

Cut off from the Congress and gravitating towards the Justice, Periyar was laying the foundations of a dynamic social movement that has since come to be styled as the "Self-Respect Movement." The gospel of social equality and the crying need for socialism were penned in the columns of his paper and preached about on a thousand platforms by himself and his band of adherents. Though not actually a Justicite he was allying himself unofficially and aligning his creed with that party.

In 1928 when the Simon Commission was announced and the Justicites were undecided, it was the bold Periyar that told the party men to welcome it with warmth. Thus the development of the informal contact with himself and the Justicites on the one hand and dynamic birth of the Self-Respect Movement were going on simultaneously in the Province until in the year 1928, the ministerial party, the Justicites and the masses were all collected and cemented in a common gathering in the Self-Respect Conference held at Chengalpattu. Abolition of caste system, abandoning of caste titles, eschewing priesthood and similar other social reforms were decided upon at Chengalpattu conference. The next momentous conference met at Erode in 1930 and *Mr. M. R. Jayakar Presided* over the same. The choice of the nomenclature of the movement of Self-Respect sent distinguished president into lyrical raptures and won his warm praise and approval

In U. S. S. R

Periyar, accompanied by Ramanathan, toured round the continent of Europe and paid a particular visit to Russia—between 1931 and 1932. The attractive social system obtaining in Russia appealed to his imagination and altogether captured his heart. The imaginations of the impressionable youth were ignited and set a flame. Periyar's materialism was steeped by his intensive study of the life in Russia. His crusade against caste and religion and superstition had drawn inspiration from the Soviet tour.

Still Periyar is no loser. He dictated his terms to the supposed Zamindari Party, compelled it to accept and incorporate his socialistic creed and programme and got himself entrenched in it as the de facto leader. The general elections came in 1937 and the Justice Party was routed. In 1938, Periyar was made the President of Justice Party—and a new era dawned on the Party from now.

DRAVIDA KAZHAGAM

The Salem Conference of Justice party held in 1944 was a turning point in the political history of Tamil Nadu. The justice party was converted as "*Dravida Kazhagam*" under Periyar. He declared that the "followers of the Kazhagam should wear black shirts wherever possible, as a symbol of the present down-trodden condition of the Dravidians." At the conference held in Tiruchirapalli in the year 1945, a black flag with a red circle in the middle was adopted.

The anti-Hindi agitation aroused the people, and Periyar and his followers courted arrest. The Tamil language speaking public will remain grateful to him because Periyar took the cudgel first against Hindi imposition and harnessed people's force to give due place to Tamil and protect it from the onslaughts of indiscriminate imposition of Hindi.

The anti-Hindi conference organised by the women in Madras, landed his service to the people and it was Dr. S. Dharmambal, the president of conference who gave E. V. Ramasami the title "Periyar (revered).

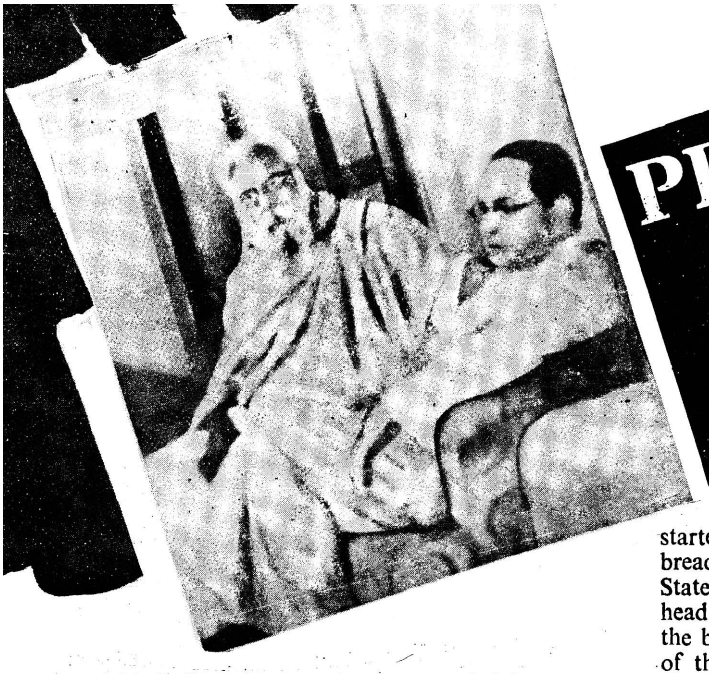
Sociologists have copious literature, theory and applied desertation to dive deep into him to make a historical study of the social reforms that Periyar had been trying to introduce to stir the people from their slumber and ignorance. He fought for women's emancipation and introduced the new practice of 'self-respect marriage.' The widow marriage is another reform that bears testimony to this radical reformist.

Periyar thought that unless the religious foundations and artificial social stratification on Puranic conception, drawing the support and recognition from the Vedas and Hindu mythology are destroyed, the people, mostly illiterate, could not be able to see the rays of scientific advancement. The social tyranny and social backwardness are related to Religion. As an agnostic, he was no believer in caste system. He wanted to strike at the root of caste. With all vehemance he said "Caste is a curse which must be abolished; to abolish caste, Religion must be abolished."

To many his approach may seem to be crude but he said "Blind belief and bland faith cannot be eradicated by reformatory work, but they can be done away with only by destructive work." He believed that Science and Technology have a greater role to play in shaping the destiny of man.

Periyar was a many-sided personality. He was a progressive thinker, objective rationalist, social reformer, public educationist, orator and powerful writer. His daily "*Viduthalai*" has been his main medium to communicate with people. "*Revolt*" and "*Kudiarasu*", his journals, made a mark in mass contact. To his credit he has over 114 publications Research scholars and social scientists have made deep study of the philosophy of Periyar. Scholars in foreign universities have also done commendable research on Periyar.

Periyar Ramasami passed away on 24-12-1973 at the age of 95, leaving the vast concourse of people mourning his death.



PERIYAR- HERO OF VAIKOM 'SATYAGRAHA'

The Vaikom Satyagraha, **spearheaded by Periyar E. V. Ramasami**, probably the first non-violent agitation in India after Gandhiji's return to motherland from South Africa, is an event of note, occupying a unique place in the history of India. Vaikom as a small village in the former princely State of Travancore, 25 miles from Kottayam, was the spotlight in 1923 when the Satyagrahis from various States including the Punjab and Gujarat participated to fight against the hydra-headed monster 'Untouchability' and to demand the civic rights to enter the public streets and the temple at Vaikom.

In the early twentees, Kerala was considered to be the 'cradle of untouchability'. Not only that. Touch-me-not-ism assumed an acute and barbarious characteristic of 'see-me-not ism.' The very sight of the 'Untouchable' polluted the caste Hindus. The low-caste had to carry umbrella to conceal their face, and public pathways were barred, to them. Not to speak of temples!

Sri Mahadeva temple, situated in the heart of Vaikom, has spacious streets around it. The lake adds another attraction to the place. The Ezhavas, Pulayas and the lowest were denied the basic civil right of using the public streets. They could not offer their prayers to Lord Siva. Individual appeal to good sense of caste Hindus and petitions to the Maharaja of Travancore fell on deaf ears. The local caste Hindus were a hard nut to crack.

It was a period when the wind of Gandhiji's social and political philosophy started to blow throughout the length and breadth of not only British India but in Princely States and Zamins too. To knock at the door of head and heart of caste Hindus and to raise the banner of human right above the pettiness of the myrmidons of Hindu orthodoxy the 'Satyagraha', a non-violent, peaceful people's agitation to change the heart—was started in Vaikom in March 30, 1924. The Hindu orthodoxy was hard-headed. The police force headed by Pitt, an English man was ruthless. Volunteers from far and near — Gujarat, New Delhi, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu to mention a few, picketed. Group after group courted arrest. The Satyagraha Ashram organised to house the volunteers and train them in non-violent agitation was full to its brim. Yet, arrests were the daily feature. Arrested were awarded rigorous or Simple Imprisonment. All leaders of the Satyagraha were behind the bars ; no one to lead and inspire the volunteers.

To save the situation and achieve the object, the **Call came from Vaikom to Periyar E.V. Ramasami Naicker who was then the President of Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.**

Periyar in Vaikom

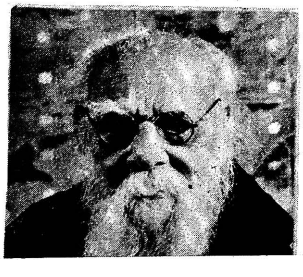
Periyar was full of vigour, enthusiasm and dedication for the cause of his mother-land. The revolutionary spirit of patriotism and social equality was burning in him. He headed a contingent of peaceful volunteers and marched to Vaikom. Congressmen and volunteers from Kanyakumari also joined him. To his surprise and to the joy of the sanatanists (Hindu orthodox) Periyar was accorded a royal reception on the outskirt of Vaikom by the officers of the royal house of the Maharaja of Travancore. The Tranvacore Maharaja and hi retinue used to halt at Erode and enjoy the hospitality of the family of Periyar whenever the Maharaja passed through Erode.

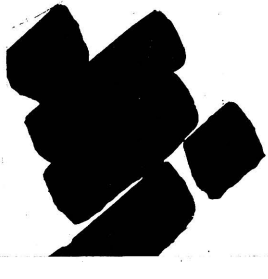
The royal reception did not deter the intrepid Periyar from his participation in and leadership of the agitation. The caste Hindus made fervant plea to Travancore Maharaja to take vigorous action against the Satyagrahis. A ban order was proclaimed, meetings were not permitted. The leader of the agitation Periyar was arrested and convicted for one month R.I. He was taken to Arivikkuthi Prison. Nagammai, wife of Periyar and his sister Kannammal and a large number of volunteers courted arrest.

The Satyagraha gained momentum and it received all India importance and publicity. Volunteers from various parts of the country and money poured in. The Satyagraha Ashramam was flowing with volunteers. Swami Siddananda came from the Punjab with about 30 volunteers and he contributed 2,000 rupees. The Satyagraha witnessed a set back at this juncture.

The caste Hindus and Sanatanists indulged in counter activities. They raised the bogey of saving Hinduism. They alleged that the satyagraha aimed at extermination of Hinduism. They started arguing that outsiders should not interfere in the affairs of Kerala. Gandhiji also said that non-Hindus and volunteers from other areas should desist from participating in the Vaikom struggle. Christians, Muslims and Sikhs started leaving Vaikom. Rajaji also opined that active participation in the affairs of other States were undesirable. Periyar was released but he plunged head-long in the agitation. Swami Siddananda and other volunteers took active part in the satyagraha despite Gandhiji's appeal. Strangely enough Periyar was again awarded six months' R.I. The caste Hindus resorted to extreme action like yajgna to root out satyagrahis. All these did not make the satyagrahis budge an inch.

The Maharaja of Travancore passed away at this time and all the prisoners were released. The Maharani wanted to make a compromise. The permission to walk on the public streets leading to the temple did not satisfy. The satyagrahis wanted complete freedom to use the roads and enter the temple. The Hindu orthodoxy was in a great predicament. Gandhiji was invited to lend support in finding out a solution. Accordingly he visited Trivancore in March, 1925.





Streets opened

The Maharani made a representation to Gandhiji and told him that the streets around the temple may be thrown open to all and the temple entry be deferred for the time being. It was an embarassing situation for Gandhiji. He invited Periyar, religious leaders for a discussion. Periyar was firm that nothing short of temple entry would satisfy them. Contrary to firm stand, it was agreed that the streets should be immediately thrown open to all sections and temple entry might be considered after bringing about a change in the head and heart of the people.

The success, though limited according to Periyar, is a boon to the people of Kerala ; because the people in Kerala were in the grip of untouchability and unapprochability; human value was at its lowest ebb. Periyar made a mark in this struggle. His dedication, devotion, firmness in conviction and steadfastness in action attracted the attention of the people all over the country. Gandhiji in his letter had commended the Satyagraha.

Periyar Memorial

The Vaikom Satyagraha Memorial Society has proposed to raise a suitable Memorial to Periyar at Vaikom. Vaikom still remembers the fire-emitting speech of Periyar. About half-a-dozen octogenarion of Kerala, the contemporaries and co-Congress workers of Viakom Satyagraha living in Kerala speak of Periyar with nostalgic feeling. Thiru K. P. Kesava Menon, Editor **"Mathrubhoomi"**, Thiru Neelakanta Namboodripad and Thiru T. V. Santamurthy Nayar bear testimony to Periyar's leadership at Vaikom.

In an interview to the **Associate Editor of Tamil Arasu,** Thiru Narasinga Nayak, President of Vaikom Satyagraha Memorial Society, said **" We plan a standing memorial to Naicker. People in Vaikom remember him with love and reverence."** The other important Vaikom agitators are Mr. K. P. Kesava Menon and an ex-MLA, Mr. Neelakanta Namboodripad. Mr. George Joseph who later settled in Madura is no more. Mr. Menon and Mr. George Joseph wrote a personal letter to Mr. Naicker to lead the Vaikom Satyagraha after all leaders were arrested by the Travancore authority."

Thiru Nayak said that the Kerala Govern ment have granted Rs. 2 lakhs and alloted 50 cents of land in front of the lake water to raise the memorial complex. The complex will have an auditorium, library and Museum. Gandhian literature will occupy considerable portion of the library.

Periyar

THOSE DAYS

K. KAMARAJ

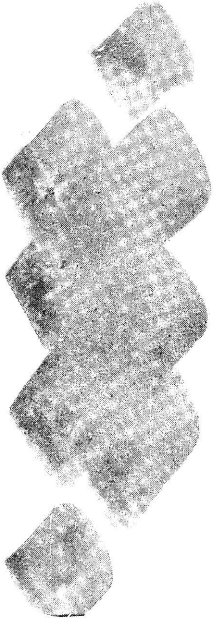
There is a background for Periyar's participation in the national struggle. The late Dr. P. Varadarajulu Naidu was a medical practitioner at Thirupur. Because of his intense association with Congress, the British Government filed a number of cases against him. One of them was for treason. That happened at Madurai. Shri Rajaji came forward to conduct the case. Those days and in those parts he was a very popular lawyer.

Dr. Naidu and Rajaji, while on the way to Madurai, used to stay with Periyar at Erode as his guests. At the residence of Periyar who loved the country so much, they often talked about public affairs. The talk would be wholly political. The talk attracted Periyar who was born in a rich family and was living like a lord. On hearing through these two men the aims of Congress and the services of Mahatma Gandhi, Periyar drew himself into the camp. In 1919, he represented the Tamil Nadu Congress as a delegate at Amritsar. The proceedings of the conference and the meeting of the Mahatma had made him out and out a nationalist. His name often appeared in the news journals.

First Meeting With Periyar

It was in 1921 that I met Periyar for the first time. He was then the Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Congress. In 1920 at Nagpur took place the Congress Conference with Salem Shri Vijaya Raghavachariar in the chair. The conference made an important turn in the battle of the Indian Independence. It was only out of that conference the Movement of Non Co-operation was born: thenceforth the propaganda of the movement gained speed.

In Tamil Nadu it was Rajaji, Dr. Naidu, and Periyar who took active part in the mass propaganda. The White Government arrested and penalised them. The judge who passed sentence of the three, however, dealt with Periyar less severely. When Periyar was released he found himself alone. But he was not discouraged. He was more active than ever before and went campaigning from district to district-himself a President, himself a Secretary. That apart, he removed the Tiruchi Office of the Tamil Nadu Congress to Erode-to his very home. By this measure, the work of the Congress intensified. His home, indeed, changed



into a refuge to congressmen. Anybody could enter his house and if it was dinner-time, the visitor could also dine ! Like Periyar, the whole family turned out to be stanchly Congress. It so looked then that it was Periyar that was Congress.

In 1921 Periyar came to Virudhunagar. I was then a congress volunteer. I was about 19 years old. Shri Govindasamy Nadar was in our place the Chairman of the Congress Committee. It was he who introduced us all to Periyar. The speech of him who wore the rough Khadi was so sharp that it never failed to touch the heart. He wanted us to make a rendezvous of all the volunteers prior to the public meeting-that was his proposal. Shri Nadar did so and Periyar addressed the volunteers first. He explained very clearly the principles of the Mahatma. It was the first time we heard a speech so elucidative. With force he spoke explaining the importance of Khadi and emphasising the idea of social reform. It is a wonder that from those days to the last he held fast to certain matters which interested him much and which he stubbornly carried out without modification; he spoke with radical vehemence and deep interest. Radicalism was with him a quality inborn. Whatever may be the work that Periyar undertook, none could compete. He did it all with such a force that there could be no parallel to it.

The meeting of the volunteers closed and the public meeting opened. As the leaders were on the dais awaiting the proceedings, a small instance took place. There was an elephant in our village temple, which was then passing by he venue of our meeting. Periyar recognised it as the one that was brought up in his home, when quite young. We were wondering how could that be, for it was too big to be recognised. On enquiry we came to know that it did happen. Periyar's power of memory was so high that it was enough for him to meet anybody once-he wouldn't forget at all.

Periyar wanted Shri Govindasamy Nadar to collect all the women who spun yarn with charka. Shri Nadar ran hither and thither and brought to his fore quite a number. Periyar sat by them and observed how they worked at it. He advised others to follow and arranged to supply charka and cotton to all the rest.

Periyar and Shri V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar came to our village. The former was then a terror to the Tamil Nadu Government, because unlike the others his, speech emitted sparks. It was Periyar's speech on chemes like khadi, removal of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and prohibition that was attractive. He used to speak clearly and vehemently. Rajaji was the not so good a speaker in Tamil. For that reason, he would make Periyar speak first and he, at the end, would deliver a short speech.

The Collector of Ramnad issued an order prohibiting speeches in Virudhunagar. Periyar became wild and I still see it. " Damn the order," he roared and came out. All felt it was not good for him to defy the order and court imprisonment, because leaders like Rajaji were all then in prison. It was only Periyar who was at that time looking

NAGAMMAIAR

after the affairs of the Congress. If he should also be caught the work would suffer. Periyar was, therefore, calmed by Thiru V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar and others with great difficulty. Periyar never once feared the police or the prison. It was all simple and slight for him-defying order and courting imprisonment. In one place or the other that would happen, and that was in the news all days.

In 1923 Periyar became President of the Tamil Nadu Congress. Then, on an All-India basis, the Congress appointed a committee to defy law. Pandit Motilal Nehru, Dr. Ansari, Dr. Ajmal khan, Rajaji, Vittalbai Patel, and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar were members of the committee. The job of the committee was to ascertain from persons of importance the manner of running the Movement. You know, the Tamil Nadu Congress had already gone to Erode, Periyar's place ! Hence the committee, too. What would be the impact in Tamil Nadu when so many great leaders visited, you may well imagine. The Tamil Nadu volunteers, as we were, we all went to Erode. Erode put up a festive look. The reception that Periyar gave the members of the committee, the hospitality that he showed all remain fresh in my memory.

Only on seeing his large abode and the great hospitality, we wondered and appreciated him so much in awe. He never had at any time the thought of his affluence. Carrying on his very shoulders the rough Khadi bundles, he did the propaganda like an ideal servant of the society.

At this Juncture a big altercation arose. Chittaranjan Doss and Motilal Nehru were stubbornly for entering legislature. But Rajaji was not for it. Rajaji used to speak beautifully in English about the Mahatma's schemes in the North. Periyar used to listen to it with rapt attention. Then in Tamil Nadu he would speak in

Tamil with what Rajaji spoke as the basic material. He would claborate for two hours what Rajaji said shortly. He would speak so nicely with winning examples that those who listened to him would doubtless come under his sway. Rajaji liked his speech s omuch that he used to say " let Shriman Naicker proceed without interruption " Rajaji and periyar would also argue with each other like lawyers. To look at and to listen to, that of course would also be sweet. The love and attachment they both had for each other is indescribable, and to whatever camp they belonged individually, they remained friends to the last.

The Nagpur flag agitation is an important stage of the freedom struggle. The volunteers went to Nagpur in order to observe Satyagraha and were arrested. Periyar sent more and more the the help he then rendered, the country cannot forget even today.

At the same time took place in Madurai a picketting in front of the toddy shops. Volunteers were needed and the voluntters had to brave the lathi charges of the police and relish the irksome like in the prison. With the sweat on his brow and with no rest whatever, he collected volunteers. So many he gathered that none more was needed. His service received people's appreciation. During that time some raised doubts as to why the picketting at all. Rajaji and Periyar answered them adequately.

Nagaimmar Arrested

Periyar did not stop with words; he did some thing more. Along with his wife Nagammaiyar and his sister Kannamma, he carried out the picketting. The whole of Tamil Nadu wondered because Nagammaiyar and Kannamma were arrested along with Periyar. In Tamil Nadu it was these two ladies who were the first to go to prison. The whole of Erode was stunned to see the people of a rich and renowned family go to prison.

Some wrote to the Mahatma that the picketting was unnecessary. He gave the following reply ; " some people have written me raising doubts about the picketting of toddy shops. There is one who can reply them adequately. That is Erode Ramasamy who has gone to prison with the members of his own family. Therefore, they can express their doubts to him." The whole of India applauded Periyar in appreciation on this reply of the Mahatma.

Vaikkom Satyagraha

In Travancore there is a village called Vaikkom. The Harijans were subjected to torture by the Caste-Hindus of the village. Shri T. K. Madhavan, Kesava Menon, and George Joseph agitated against that. The agitation did not gather warmth. They wrote to Periyar to go over to the place. Periyar did so immediately with a number of volunteers. He made a whirl-wind tour of Vaikkom and addressed many public meetings exposing the atrocities. There was good response to every one of his speeches. On seeing that, the State authorities invoked Section 144 Civil Procedure Code. Periyar defied it and spoke at Kottayam and courted arrest. He was sentenced to one month's imprisonment. He was just awaiting the 30 days to pass. Immediately on his release he began addressing the public. The State authorities banned his entry into Travancore. Unscared of the order, he stepped into the State and addressed a meeting, too. He was again arrested and sentenced to six months R. I. By this time, Periyar's disobedience of State Orders and the arrests gained an All-India importance. Gandhi wrote condemning vehemently the suppression and praising sky-high the action of Periyar. Besides, Gandhiji warned that if the restrictions imposed on the Harijans were not removed as per the wishes of Periyar, a big agitation would be launched. The State authorities. cast away the restrictions in accordance with Periyar's wishes and released him, too. This agitation got him the title, " The Hero of Vaikkom ". The instance made Gandhiji hold Periyar in high esteem.

Khadi Work

To popularise Khadi, it was Periyar who established a " Sangh " in Tirupur, Periyar had then an unshakable faith in Gandhiji's constructive programmes. He took on himself the full responsibility in the field ; spoiling his sleep he toiled at night and losing his dinner he worked in the day.

Rajaji opened " Gandhi Ashram " in Pudupalayam in order to popularise Khadi and to serve the village. A question arose as to who should inaugurate the Ashram. In spite of the numerous names suggested, Rajaji decisively and in a pointed manner proposed the name of " Shriman Naicker." The Ashram which Periyar inaugurated is still running in flying colours.

Though born with silver spoon in the mouth, yet from those days he was against luxury. He used to travel only in III Class compartments with no mattress and always with a big cloth bag on his shoulder. He would take out a piece of cloth from the bag and spread it, no matter what the place is. It is the bag that was his pillow. He was carefully thrifty and that is a very great lesson the men of public affairs should learn.

He spoke in Madurai about the Gaya Congress resolution—to enter or not to enter Legislature. He spoke with wit and force. " Some people want us to measure inversely ; some advocate cross-measuring ; some others advise the straight way-nothing will suit." " Whether a horse or a donkey, it makes no difference, for after all, the entry is into the ruined forest." so said he. While speaking on the entry of Harijans into the temple, he said : " What if he looks at the deity that is behind the screen for him ? If the deity gets angry, let it hide itself, why do you bother."

His past days are full of rousing pursuits—the days that catch the heart, never to part.

(From Periyar Memorial Souvenir)

TRIBUTE BY A PATRIOT

I need not say much about Thiru Ramasami Naicker. What am I to say while his name and fame is highly commended in the Parliament in Europe. The unique character of Thiru Naicker was his frank and candid expression of what he feels.

V. O. CHIDAMBARAM PILLAI.

"WHO AM I"—PERIYAR

"I, E. V. Ramasami, bear the burden of serving the Dravidian society to reform it and make it an intelligent society with self-respect on par with other social groups in the world. I don't know whether or not I have the qualification to serve in this direction. Since no one in this country has come forward to take up this task, I volunteered to shoulder it and I continue to serve. As I have no other fascination and as I chalk out policies and plans on the basis of rationalism, I think I qualify myself to take up this service. I feel this qualification is enough for a man serving the society."

—*Periyar* **E. V. RAMASAMI**

Periyar Centenary Celebration year-PROGRAMMES

The following recommendations of the Periyar Centenary Committee are being examined by the Government of Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Government will take all steps to execute these recommendations in proper manner at the appropriate time during the Centenary Year.

The Centenary Committee while congratulating the Government of Tamil Nadu which has come forward to celebrate the Centenary of Periyar E. V. Ramasami in a fitting manner, has recommended the following Schemes for execution during the year. The Committee has also expressed its full support and co-operation to the Government in this connection.

1. The Centenary of Periyar should be celebrated throughout the year commencing from 17th September, 1978 and ending on the 17th September, 1979.

2. The inaugural function of the Periyar Centenary should be celebrated on 17-9-1978 at his birth place, Erode and valedictory function on 17-9-1979 at Erode.

3. From October 1978 to August 1979 functions should be arranged in each district every month for one or two days.

4. The local bodies, voluntary organisations and other institutions should be encouraged to celebrate the centenary in all places of the State.

5. The Government should issue instructions to the concerned authorities in the districts to form Committees with the representatives of the Public so that functions in the Districts can be celebrated in a fitting manner with their co-operation and assistance.

6. Steps should be taken to celebrate the centenary in a grand-manner not only in Tamil Nadu but also in other State capitals like Bangalore, Hyderabad, Trivandrum, New Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta as well as in other countries like Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore and Burma.

7. The function relating to the release of Periyar Stamp should be arranged in Erode on 17-9-1978.

8. The streets and areas in the Corporations, Municipalities and Panchayats which bear caste names should be changed. Names of individuals with castes attached should also be changed wherever possible.

9. The formation of Colonies exclusively for Harijans should be avoided and in future, houses for Harijans should be built as far as possible along with the houses of other castes. It should be so arranged that people of all castes reside along with the Harijans in the houses that are newly constructed.

10. Inter-caste marriages should be encouraged by extending concessions to their children in education, employment etc on the same lines as extended to the physically handicapped. Efforts should be taken during the Centenary year itself.

11. Similar concessions should be extended to the remarried widows and their children.

12. The Government should oppose the compulsory imposition of Hindi for which Periyar fought during his life time.

13. The State Government should impress upon the Centre to amend the Constitution to include English in the Eighth Schedule.

14. Nehru's assurance on the continuance of English so long the Non-Hindi States demand should be stressed to the Central Government.

15. Commemoration slabs may be fixed in the cells of the prisons where he was kept under arrest.

16. A big Conference Hall with all amenities may be constructed at a central place in Madras in memory of Periyar.

17. In memory of Periyar who propagated for the scientific knowledge among people a Science Museum may be set up in Madras.

18. The proposed University at Trichy or Coimbatoe may be named after Periyar.

19. Biography of Periyar may be prepared in consultation with experts and may be published at the valedictory function of Periyar Centenary.

20. Periyar's biography may be prepared in Cartoons and Photographs for the benefit of the children.

21. The Sayings of Periyar may be brought out under various topics.

22. His biography may be brought out in other languages also.

23. Some of his books banned may be republished.

24. His books may be purchased and kept in all libraries in Tamil Nadu.

25. Periyar life history may be included in the text books of schools and colleges suitably.

26. An autonomous Institute of Periyar Studies may be formed to undertake research on the ideals of Periyar.

27. Government may take necessary action to implement the Tamil Script reform as suggested by Periyar.

28. Further research on the language reform may be undertaken by the Government by forming an Expert Committee.

29. All the Schools and Colleges may be instructed to celebrate the Centenary Celebrations of Periyar and to organise oratorical, essay and poetry competitions and to award prizes for the winners.

30. Periyar Thoughts may be broadcast in All India Radio on the same lines as Gandhiji's thoughts are broadcast.

31. The Centenary Celebrations may be periodically broadcast and Telecast for the benefit of the public.

32. All India Radio and Television may interview those who were connected with Periyar.

33. A sound and light programme on Periyar's life may be prepared and conducted as done for Poet Bharathiyar.

34. The life history and important incidents in the life of Periya and his teachings may be inscribed at the proposed memorial and at important places.

35. Efforts should be taken to amend the Constitution in such a way that eligible people from all communities could become Archakas.

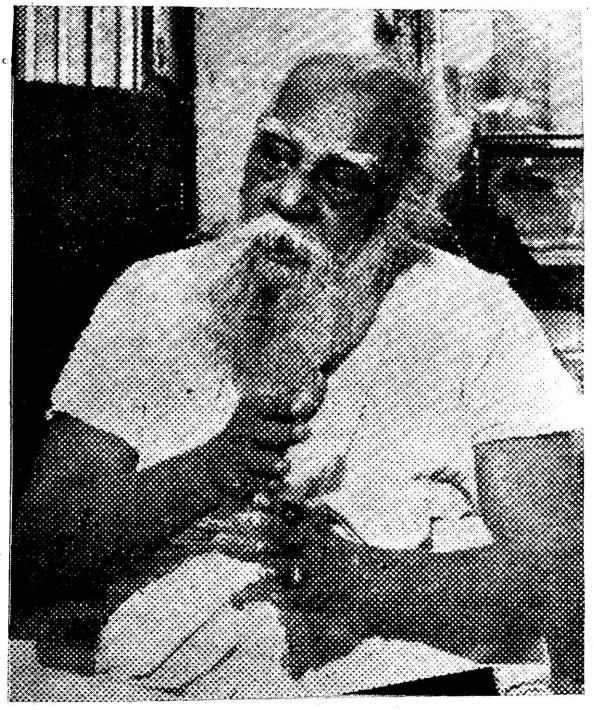
36. Suitable directions may be included in the Constitution to abolish the caste system as has been done for the eradication of untouchability.

37. The Chairman has been empowered by the Committee to contact the Government and arrange for the execution of the decisions on behalf of the Committee.

CHAMPION OF JUSTICE

A very different type of man was E.V. Ramasami (who lately died in his nineties, mourned by millions in South India who called him fondly "Evoe"), by no means a world figure like Tagore or Nehru, little known even outside the southern States of India, but on any reasoning a remarkable figure; in many ways an unlikely Indian, positive in his pride and prejudice, a born non-conformist, irreverent towards tradition by which even progressive Indians often swear, iconoclastic about social customs and religious beliefs; the progenitor, in South India, of militant movement of the depressed castes; drawn powerfully once towards Gandhi but repelled by compromises with social reaction; the champion of "justice" (not philanthrophy) to suppressed people, the rebel against Hindu orthodoxy, the inspirer of "Dravidar Kazhagam"

(Prof. Hiren Mukerjee — Excerpt from "Time Tested Treasure")



PERIYAR

has revolutionised thought in South India

P. C. GANESAN

One of the greatest social reformers of our time, Periyar E. V. Ramasami is perhaps the most misrepresented public figure of the South. May be such misrepresentation was inevitable in the arduous and uphill role he had taken upon himself to reform a society that was steeped in rank superstition and religious self-deception. He relentlessly continued the crusade for more than half-a-century and had achieved success to a degree that no other social reformer could in his life time. He had been branded as an infidel and heretic by his opponents and they did all in their power to consign him to the communal and anti-social class. Periyar withstood all the onslaughts and attacks of orthodoxy and religious bigotry like a granite-tower. He lived for 94 years and when now one looks back upon his life, and could hardly escape the feeling that his life was one of fulfilment.

It was an irony that Periyar E. V. Ramasami, the rationalist and agnostic, was born the son of pious and God-fearing parents who were bakthas in the most orthodox sense of the term. Not only Periyar but so many other rationalists like Ingersoll have been the sons of religious fathers that one is tempted to think, there is probably a law of Nature by which theology carries its retribution in its own bosom.

Inquisitive Mind

Periyar's father Venkatappa Naicker's efforts to make his son religious were of no avail and the naughty youngster was irresistably attracted towards an unfettered life. He could not submit himself to the rigours and regimentation of schooling. A diamond that he was, perhaps he had the intuition even in his early years that he was not a pebble to be polished by schools and colleges. Even as a youngster he exhibited a remarkable power of reasoning and the religious Pundits who used to visit his father to have theological discourses, were struck by the youngsters prodigious skill in arguing.

At the age of twenty-four, being dissatisfied with the treatment meted out to him by his father, he left home and went to Banares and ironically enough, he who later became a severe critic of rituals and ceremonies lived at Banares a life of resignation as a sanyasi. This did not last long. He returned and took up his father's business. As a businessman his popularity grew. In 1917 he was elected the Chairman of the Erode Municipal Council. Thus he came to be introduced to public life.

Triumvirate in Tamil Nadu

It was due to the efforts of P. Varadarajulu Naidu and Rajaji that Periyar Ramasami joined the Congress organisation. The muslin-clad Ramasami began to wear coarse khadi. His palatial building became the abode of Satyagrahis. To popularise khadi he carried loads of the coarse cloth on his back and sold them in the streets. He who later opposed Hindi tooth and nail and conducted many a struggle against it was the one who was responsible for starting Hindi patasalas in Tamil Nadu. He was a zealous Congress worker and spared no pains to carry in spirit and in letter Mahatma Gandhi's constructive programmes. The heroic part he played in the Vaikom Satyagraha in the cause of the untouchables became a legend as it were and Mahatma Gandhi paid glowing tributes to Periyar Ramasami's qualities as an ardent Satyagrahi. The great influence that the

Congress of those days had on the masses of Tamil Nadu was mainly due to the Triumvirate Periyar Ramasamy, Varadarajulu Naidu and Thiru Vi. Kalyanasundaranar. In appreciation of his services he was elected President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Conference of Tiruvannamalai in the year 1924. That gave him an opportunity to make an extensive tour of Tamil Nadu and study the condition of the masses first-hand. The experience he gained then stood him in good stead in later years.

It was a sad incident at Sermadevi that made him sever his connections with the Congress. A Gurukulam was sponsored by leading Congress luminaries of Tamil Nadu at Sermadevi, the chief promoter of which was V.V.S. Iyer, a Tamil scholar and revolutionary patriot. The Gurukulam was started ostensibly with the purpose of inculcating in the youngsters a classless and casteless outlook. Non-Brahmin leaders like Periyar Ramaswami, P. Varadarajulu Naidu, Thiru Vi. Ka. and others toiled night and day to collect funds for the Gurukulam to put it on sound financial footing. The Tamil Nadu Congress also liberally donated towards its funds. V.V.S. Iyer who was entrusted with the responsibility of running the Gurukulam was however not true to the ideals for which the Gurukulam was started and rather betrayed them by running a separate kitchen, mess, prayer Assembly, etc. for Brahmin inmates of the Gurukulam. Periyar the patriot and social reformer, could not stand this communal approach and when his efforts to do away with casteism inside the Congress failed, he had no alternative but to walk out of its fold. He understood that with many to practise was not so easy as to preach. Later incidents in his life also confirmed this belief. As one who believed that social emancipation should precede political emancipation, he began to direct his attention solely to free the downtrodden castes from the clutches of the arrogant upper class people.

Self-Respect Movement

After his exit from the Congress, Periyar reinforced his Self-Respect Movement with redoubled vigour. It evoked severe opposition from the old guards of Congress heirarchy. He propagated his views through his weekly "Kudi Arasu" which gained a wide circulation. Srinivasa Ayyangar, Thiru Vi. Kalyanasundaranar, and M. Satyamurthi became his severest political opponents. The enormous opposition he encountered made him cautious and resourceful.

To keep himself abreast of the times he toured Malaya and Europe. He stayed in Europe for a year and visited the Soviet Union and Egypt. After his return from Europe, new honours awaited him. He was elected Chairman of the Justice Party. Soon he became a potent factor to be reckoned with in contemporary politics. The Justice Party under Periyar's leadership metamorphosed into Dravida Kazhagam, and to the end of his life Periyar made use of this organisation to wage a valiant battle for social reform and eradication of superstition. The spade-work done by Periyar for so many decades, in this difficult field had created a conducive climate in the South, especially in Tamil Nadu, for progressive social legislation. His untiring propaganda in every nook and corner of Tamil Nadu had made the people's mind receptive to certain social legislations which otherwise would have encountered stiff opposition from gullible people.

Old Ideology

Periyar's ideologies are not something monstrous as some people would have us believe. Materialism and atheism are not newly propounded theories. They are as old as the conception of God and Theism. It is often pointed out that Periyar's criticisms are crude and couched in the bitterest language. But Periyar was convinced that in a country populated by a large percentage of illiterates whose faith in God and religion was deep rooted, only crude and bitter words would produce the desired result. While addressing public meetings he never labours for style. His language was simple and direct. His speeches were devoid of alliteration and rhyme. But they were punctuated with homely smiles and simple parables. He was at his best when faced with a volley of questions or heckled by a hostile audience. The late Va. Ra. rightly described his speeches as "Niagara of sense and passion."

Natural Logician

Unschooled though he was, his solutions for the present-day social evils are worthy of merit and consideration. That was why despite his political views, he was much respected by his political opponents.

Periyar was not merely a social reformer, but an Institution. He had the simplicity of childhood, the enthusiasm of youth and the wisdom of age. His vehemence was without violence. He was a natural logician. He never missed his target.

In his rejection of religion and all that it pretends to give, he was a secularist. In his disbelief in God and other speculative conceptions he was an atheist. In his scientific approach to all human problems he was a rationalist. But none can deny, by his forthright and candid analysis of all problems, whether social, political or religious, Periyar has revolutionised thought in South India.

Gandhiji's Letter to THANTHAI PERIYAR

"Mahatma Gandhi wrote to me twice. On the first occasion, he wrote a letter commending my work. The second letter was written when I was suffering from pain in my hand. In the letter he said " the pain may be due to your spinning of charka continuously. So, it is better you stop spinning till the pain subsides." The Civil Disobedience Movement was at its peak. Thousands of men and women who participated in this movement courted arrest. At this juncture, Sir Sankaran Nair convened a peace conference for peaceful negotiation with India Government in order to create a calm atmosphere in politics. He wanted that the agitation be withdrawn before the peace talks commenced. Gandhiji did not accept this pre-condition... Addressing the peace conference Gandhiji said " The withdrawal of the agitation is not in my hands. It is in the hands of E. V. Ramasami's sister and his wife in Erode."..

There is reason for such statement of Gandhiji. After my wife was arrested for participation in the agitation, many followed her to prison. My family in Erode enjoyed good reputation. Besides, I had also served as the chairman of Erode Municipality. No wonder that more number of people—friends and supporters courted arrest.

Coconut Trees Felled down

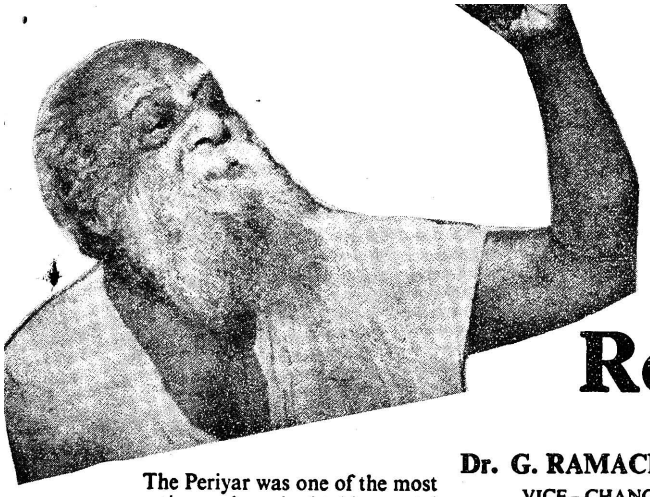
In those days I was a protoganist of Prohibition. I felled down coconut trees in my farm in order to make prohibition a success. Following me, my friends also cut down the coconut trees in their farms. A critical situation arose in 1924 whether or not the Congress should participate in the elections. My argument was that it should not participate in the elections. But Gandhiji gave permission to the Congress to join the elections. Subsequently I suggested an alternative. I said that, if it is to participate in the elections, 50% of the seats should be reserved for Non-Brahmins and the rest be shared among all sections.

I brought it as a resolution before the Provincial Congress Conference held at Kancheepuram in that year. My resolution was not admitted. I also quit the Congress. When I was taking rest in Bangalore, Gandhi invited me to pacify me. Ramanathan and myself met him. But I did not accept his explanation.

In later days Gandhi advocated three ideas that I could accept *viz.*, (1) Congress should be dissolved ; (2) formation of secular Government ; and (3) Brahmins should confine themselves to religious activities and allow others to get education and occupy offices.

I was the first President of the newly formed Khadi Board for five years... I bought buildings in important places and set up Khadi stalls and increased Khadi sales. K. Santhanam was then the Secretary of the Board. We had differences of opinion over appointments. To some extent, Gandhi made a compromise of our differences. The Khadi Boards then were merged with the Akhil Bharath Charka Sangh, formed on all India basis. As a result the Provincial Khadi Boards were deprived of their powers. I was not happy over it."

[From 'Gandhiji in Tamil Nadu'
by A. RAMASAMI]



PERIYAR A Revolutionary

Dr. G. RAMACHANDRAN,
VICE—CHANCELLOR,
Gandhigram Rural University,
Madurai District.

The Periyar was one of the most romantic and redoubtable social revolutionaries of Tamilnad of our time. Even as early as 1925, when I started to work in Tamilnad, his name was one to conjure with as a social iconoclast. My earliest years in Tamilnad were spent in Khadi work in Tiruppur in close association with the late S. Ramanathan who was one of the Periyar's closest associates. It was through Ramanathan that I came to deeply appreciate the revolutionary ideas of the Periyar in social matters. I never agreed with his politics but remained a profound admirer of his ceaseless efforts in demolishing religious and social superstitions and particularly the caste system which was and is our biggest superstition. If the Periyar had not got mixed up with politics but remained simply a social revolutionary like the great Sri Narayana Guru of Kerala, he would have succeeded much more than he did in transforming society.

Powerful Tonque and Pen

Periyar was undoubtedly the Voltaire of the Tamil Renaissance and he used his tongue and pen with terrific effect upon many superstitions and orthodoxies which were degrading Hindu society. He was a matchless Tamil orator using the simplest language and talking to people in their own idiom.

He and Rajaji were once co-workers and when they drifted apart in politics, they still continued their personal and friendly relations till the end of their lives. When as Governor General of India, Rajaji came to Tiruvannamalai after the death of the Ramana Maharishi, he stopped his special train to pick up the Periyar on the way.

Memorial for Periyar

There are two memorials I would suggest to the memory of the Periyar. The first may well be an " Institute and Hall of Rationalism " in Madras City for which funds should be collected throughout Tamilnad from the common people. The second idea may be to bring out a carefully edited series of publications entitled " Collected works of Ramasamy Periyar " which may run into a score of volumes easily.

When many other controversial names in the cultural and political renaissance of Tamilnad are for gotten, his name will continue to be remembered along with two other immortals namely Rajaji and Kamaraj. Another name of course which will remain immortal is that of Poet Bharathy but he belongs to a separate category. In utter fearlessness, dedication to the poor and in loyalty to their own ideals, Rajaji, the Periyar and Kamaraj will inspire the mind of the Tamil people for centuries to come.

REMOVAL OF UNTOUCHABILITY

" Now to the curse of unto uchability. Our country has the monopoly for see-me-not-isms and touch-me-not-isms. A country where there is a class of people who are not entitled to walk in public streets, who are not allowed to worship God in their own temples, who are prevented from using the common wells and tanks-such a country may as well be destroyed by an earthquake, burnt out by a volcano, or submerged by the ocean. I appeal to the reformers both social and political to carry on the mission of removing the sin of untouchability and cleanse our society of the dirt that has accumulated for centuries ".

—**E. V. Ramasami.**

PERIYAR
THE PHENOMENON

DR. V.C. KULANDAISWAMY
Vice-Chancellor,
Kamaraj University

Periyar Ramasami, a giant among the leaders, a revolutionary among the reformers; and a radical among the free thinkers, is a unique phenomenon in the history of human development. In the vast panorama of man's struggles for reform, it is hard to find a movement parallel to his; harder still to find an equal in the congregation of reformers that history has on its pages.

The world knows of many reformers-social and political, knows of many freethinkers and rationalists, who preached their ideas and ideals. Rationalism and reform, radicalism as well as revolution, either in their moderate or extreme forms have been part of the deve lopment of human civilization. But the rationalist movement of Periyar, and his social reform measures, mark a new era in the history of rationalist movement; constitute a new dimension in the struggle for social reform.

Achievements

From the days of Socrates in the distant past, to those of Russel in the recent past, those who advocated such qualities of mind as objective thinking, logical reasoning and rational analysis, have no doubt left behind their speeches and writings, to be read, thought over and propagated. They themselves, brought about no significant change in the approach or the outlook of the society in which they lived. No one ever seriously thinks of comparing the Athens ' before ' and ' after' Socrates. We do not seriously think of discussing the perceptible changes that the writings and speeches of Bertrand Russel have brought about in the social or political life of Britain. But the story is vastly different in the case of Periyar. He leaves behind him a people and a land, vastly different from the one that he entered, and in that change, a substantial part is his own contribution. He has ushered into the society of which he was a part, a new approach and a new outlook : created in the minds of the people a new set of values; infused in them such confidence, strength and sense of self-respect, as made them all men out of dust. It is a transformation unique and totally unknown in the accomplishments of the world including those titans who rode like a colossus on the international scene.

The epoch-making achievements fo Periyar, who was an institution and movement, all by himself, were not ones that were easily made. His achievements were a unique reward to, and the result of, many exemplary components that go to make the phenomenon that was Periyar.

Leaders of people there were, who were indifferent to comforts and conveniences ; who were unmindful of obstacles and opposition ; who revelled in fighting against odds and facing challenges but all of them were certainly concerned with their reputation; were always concerned with the image they presented to the people of their time, and the image they might leave for posterity about themselves. What the society thinks of them today, and may think of them tomorrow and in the days ahead, were matters that engaged their attention and influenced their thought, word and deed. Periyar was absolutely unconcerned with this aspect. He was indifferent to praise and blame, he was convinced, beyond doubt, that social reform and popular approval were a contradiction in terms, and the one who entered this field should, as a prerequisite, forget all about " office " and " popularity ". He was clear in his mind that he had something very substantial to offer to the society ; but had nothing to benefit from it either while

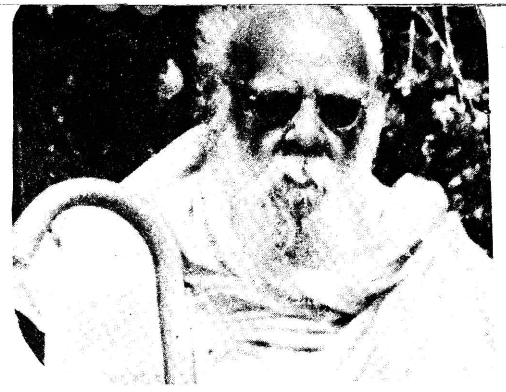
alive, or thereafter. This perhaps was the fountain of the strength of mind he consistently displayed, and the unbending stand he took, against many faiths and practices.

Versatile Genius

There is hardly any area of knowledge or activity that he has not thought of, and spoken about. The versatile genius that he was, he showed interest naturally in every phase of life. He reacted to the political developments of his time; participated actively in some of them; expressed his views on language and literature; outlined his approach to problems of labour and expounded his philosophy of economic growth and development. Notwithstanding all these, he was out and out a social reformer and his mission was the establishment of a society free from social inequalities, superstitions and bondage of any kind that inhibited freedom of thought. His direction was clear; the goal was obvious; he relentlessly and restlessly pursued his objectives. In this long and momentous mission, he might have sought occasionally the help of political organisations; the support of language movements; the partnership of writers and leaders. These were in the nature of looking for a spoke for his wheel, or a sail for his boat. These were again small links in a long, long chain. Those who can see his main ' Objective ' in its full perpective, can also understand the philosophy of his ' approach ' in clear light. Those who see individual events and isolated actions in his life, may miss the substance of his great struggle, and may come out with conclusions

Simplicity

Characteristic of the blind men who tried to comprehend the elephant. Combined with the



depth of his thoughts, and richness of his objectives, was the simplicity of his personal qualities. The two great attributes of his character that stood by him in this long journey, and sustained his efforts, were thrift and simplicity. Economy, it is said, is the cornerstone of virtue. Men who had even the slightest inclination for comfort, and the faintest interest in pomp and power, could never contribute anything substantial to the society at large. History has no single instance of such men having left anything behind in the form of social changes that endured. Periyar taught and reformed not only through what he preached and propagated, but also by the way he lived, and worked. Many, clad in saintly robes, and professing simple living and high thinking only have attempted to teach or influence the society by precept rather than by practice. But Periyar who condemned all forms of asceticism, and made no virtue out of renouncing the natural and legitimate pleasures of life, lived the life of a great ascetic and a puritan.

Collected works of Periyar

The life and work of Periyar will form the subject of research during the centuries ahead for students in politics, social sciences, religion, philosophy, language and literature. The materials for this research will be the speeches and writings contributed by him over a period of nearly 75 years of active public life. The greatest contribution that we could make to help posterity understand him in proper light and perspective, is to collect and publish his writings and speeches. It is not a simple task. It must be done, not by an individual, but by a group of men who can read and comprehend the entire material, take an integrated picture, and organise them on the basis of the subject matter dealt with, the message sought to be delivere, and the prevailing background against which the words were written or spoken. We have to approach the job with the qualities and dimensions of an encyclopaedia in mind. The volumes would constitute a treasure which will have the characteristic that the more one seeks, the more one finds; the deeper one penetrates, the richer one grows.

PERIYAR — A TRAVEL BIRD

For Periyar E. V. Ramasami, agility was an alien biological factor. His robust-body nourished by every spicy and nutritious food always kept him in good-stead. He abhorred the mention of his age and rest.

Even at the age of 93, he wandered as a warrior fighting for the cause of his mission and educating the people. He participated in more than two or three frunctions a day, at different places, divided by more than a hundred miles. For Example : In November, 1971, in **his 93rd year** he participated in 32 meetings, commencing on November 4, and concluding on November 29, with a respite of 6 intervening days.

[From 94th Birthday Souvenir.]

An outlook for an intellectual memorial for PERIYAR and ANNA

DR. V. SHANMUGASUNDARAM
Professor of Economics, University of Madras.

Two mass leaders Periyar and Anna have dominated the public life of Tamil Nadu for more than half a century. First Periyar was an ardent Congress man—long before many Congress leaders of Tamil Nadu Later Periyar is known for life-long devotion to a specific social reform movement.

Periyar's Crusade against Caste

Periyar E. V. Ramasami ealised the need to play the role of ıa social and religious reformer. Periyar went a step towards denying the existence of "God" and preached rationalism. It is at this distance of time to still consider Periyar E. V. R. as " Periyar E. V. Ramasamy Naicker" knowing his determination to abolish castes it is illogical and intellectual distortion to call him Mr. Naicker.

Any crusade against caste becomes in turn a fight against social, economic and hereditary privileges. Surely such protests when they affect the easy superiority of life, customs and manners it is not easy to get many supporters in safe places.

By and large Periyar E. V. R. is one of the greatest reformers of modern times and more rightly Dr. A. Ramasami Mudaliar called him the Rousseau of modern times Rousseau indeed, he was in several ways but also he was more so in his defence of property. His Russian visit, led him to take social reform, and he believed that economic reform would follow automatically. My discussion with him suggested his priorities were wholly in the world of applied sociology.

Sometimes in his extremist defence of certain persons in positions, he only served social reform. Whatever might be the other faults, he liked a good friend, and as a gentleman he would never let down followers. He would never exploit a trusted party worker. He was a leader among leaders and he led social reforms like a modern Socrates. Anna was his Aristotle.

Anna soft spoken

Anna, was by nature, soft spoken, quite unusually engrossed in an idea, and unmindful of the clock or the calender he has rendered service to the Society more than any one of his age, in Tamil Nadu social life in some chosen ways. It was in the grip of Periyar's philosophy that Anna's earlier fervour was formed. Anna's meticulous language blossomed and he thanked his teacher for the leadership opportunities.

Anna's eloquence

In his afable words people have been often carried away to turn their love of language and diction to new ideology. In the years of his battle against Hindi, and in the defence of the underprivileged, and in support of the ideals of rationalism and in praise of the glory of the Tamil, the vision of Anna covered a vast vista. Genuine culture and nobility characterised him in all that he did. The secret of Anna having gathered around him so many young, educated and scholarly persons-whatever be the narrow definition that Colleges and Universities would give for scholarship-was his intellectual bent of mind. He could criticise without being offensive. He would disagree in cheerful words. His attack was so soft that one realised it after its full impact has had the intended effect. His mind was free from malice and his purpose was surely idealistic.

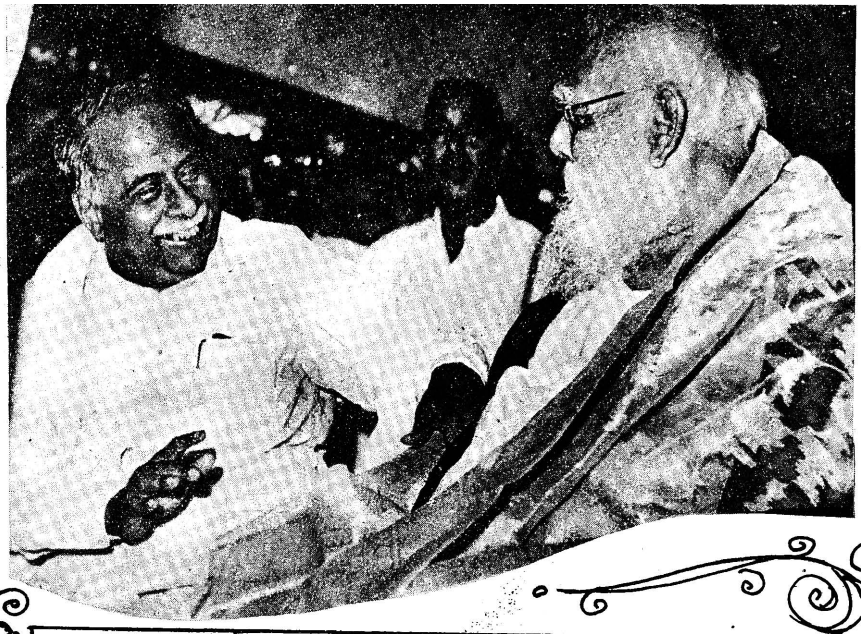
His college motto

His love for his former teachers was a reflection of his attachment to what they taught him. Long after he has become a legend in his own times he had the humility to acknowledge his early association. Anna studied in Pachaiyappa's College. Having known Anna for these decades, who can say that the college motto 'mind moves the body' has not been proved beyond doubt by his public life.

Periyar, Anna-an institution

A true memorial for Periyar and Anna is an institution or a learned body, or a mission to promote higher learning. Many a relevant movement for radical social and economic reforms could flow from it.

They should have an intellectual memorial. Anna will be known for three things (i) to have fought along with Periyar as a great exponent of applied sociology (ii) to have created a new style of writing, speech and usage of Tamil and English for contemporary purposes and (iii) to have given us his political testament of Federalism comparable to the American federalists.



The Versatility of C. N. Annadurai

DR. R. E. ASHER, *University of Edinburgh, Scotland.*

It would seem to be a basic feature of human nature to retain a special affection for the initiator of a series of a pleasant things. Thus, no visit to a foreign country one learns to love ever gives quite so much pleasure as the first. The first great cathedral or temple one sees always retains a grandeur that ones visited later never seem to match. The first orchestral concert one attends is remembered as the most exciting and pleasing of all.

The same is true of the first book one reads in a language other than one's own. It is this which provides a number of reasons why I am pleased to be invited to join in this volume of tributes to Arignar Anna, the distinguished Chief Minister of Madras. For it happens that the first book I ever read in Tamil-apart from such things as school readers, which fall into quite a different category-was his drama ***Ore Iravu.***

Before this, I had quite naturally heard much about the glories of ancient Tamil literature and had read such of the classics as were available in translation-notably the three major translations of Dr. G. U. Pope. But a good part of the appeal of Tamil lies in the fact that it is one of the few languages with a literary tradition of two thousand years or more that has continued right up to the present day. From the start, therefore, I was eager to know whether comtemporary literature had anything worthwhile to offer. C.N.A.'s *Ore Iravu* (*one Night*) was enough to suggest that it had. I see no reason to revise my initial impression that this is a good play.

Many excellent plays get off to a slow start as a result of the difficulty experienced by the dramatist in presenting the setting and motivation for the main part of the action. By a skilful succession of short (superficially unrelated) scenes to present the setting and dominant atmosphere of play, C. N. A. here holds our attention right from the start. The pace is then maintained throughout by means of dialogue in a very modern idiom.

It is not easy in a discussion of modern Tamil writing to draw a clear line between theatre and cinema. Indeed a somewhat different version of Ore Iravu (*One Night*) made a by no means unsuccessful film. Because of the "box office" demands in India that the action of a film should be regularly interrupted by song-and-dance routines, few Indian films (with the notable exceptions of the work of Satyajit Ray) are found entirely satisfying aesthetically by foreign audiences. This, however should not be allowed to blind us to the literary merits of certain scripts when written by a master of dialogue. Such a case is the script of Velaikkari (*Servant Maid*) which, with the songs conveniently relegated to an appendix, reads as a straight play with many of the qualities of Ore Iravu. Indeed on one point, namely the realism of its dialogue, it might be held to be superior.

Velaikkari (*Servant Maid*) is, of course, a filmplay with a message; and indeed Mr. Annadurai has the reputation of always using his considerable literary talents for the purpose of making political or social "propaganda". The controversy about

the nature of literature-with one side claiming that it must have a social content and the other arguing the case for " art for art's sake "—is both an old one and one that will always be with us. Without taking a stand on this, one can note that Mr. Annadurai's literary creations are of two sorts (though with no clear line drawable between them). Some of his stories, for instance, make good reading because of the way in which they present fascinating characters or situations, and not by virtue of an important " message ". An example of this is Nadodi. This has a lot in common with the author's theatre-and-film-plays, in that it is almost entirely made up of dialogue-dialogue moreover, of a very colloquial style. But as a good short story must, it depicts the personality of the few involved in the action of the story by short, telling phrases.

A novel, by way of contrast, can, and indeed must, fill in more detail, both through narrative and dialogue. It demands a different sort of skill and a different kind of technique. And here is yet another literary technique of which C. N. A. has shown his mastery. The author's own awareness of his control of this medium is apparent in the opening chapter of Rangoon Radha, where by implication the outcome of the story is stated almost at the begining of the book. In spite of this the reader is still curious to know how the action will develop to reach this conclusion.

It is inevitable, with narrative having an importance in a novel that it clearly does not have in a play or even in a short story, that the language of this book should be more formal than that of the other writings so far mentioned in this essay. Stylistically it stands mid-way between the colloquial Tamil of the plays and stories, and the language of Mr. Annadurai's non-fictional compositions. And, however much one may like and admire his work in the field or prose-fiction and drama, there can be no doubt that his main claim to have made a significant contribution to the development of Tamil prose style lies in his powerful oratory. There is no need to stress his originality in this, and the importance of his public-speaking as a model for others is clear from the large number of admiring imitators. But it is interesting to note that this elequence that has given him so many followers is to be seen in Mr. Annadurai's novels also-even in conversational like authentic conversations. There is an example in the first chapter of Rangoon Radha. Though not undeserving of the word " eloquent ", this passage is nevertheless a good way from the magnificent, complex and intricately constructed sentences that are the hall-mark of an Annadurai speech. To hear him speak in public is an essential part of the education of anyone who is interested in understanding something about modern Tamil and in learning what the Tamil language is capable of. It is impossible to have any acquaintance with Tamil and Tamil Nad for long without being aware of this.

But what many of us who had been taught by our Tamil friends to appreciate the linguistic talents of Arignar Anna were not aware of, was his quite extraordinary mastery of English. Then came the Second International Conference-Seminar

of Tamil Studies, at the concluding session of which we were privileged to hear the Chief Minister speak in English. After this no delegate to the conference could fail to understand how he has gained such a following through his speeches in his mother tongue. For this was a great performance, mingling humour with sentiment, wit with profundity in a way that no native speaker of English present on the occasion could have surpassed, or even equalled. Nor should the technical mastery displayed make us forget either the moderation of the views expressed or the sincerity with which they were put forward. There was no sign of the " Extremist " that C. N. A. used occasionally to be reputed to be.

One aspect of his supposed " extremism " that one occasionally hears-talk of is the way in which he reputedly never uses a borrowed word when writing or when speaking in public in Tamil. Any page of his works of fiction or drama will show this to be untrue ; for C. N. A. is no pedant. Thus one frequently finds such words and phrases. The essential feature of C. N. A.'s Tamil style, in fact, is his use of words and constructions that are appropriate for the context and for the occasion. If dialogue is to be realistic, it must contain grammatical forms and vocabulary items (whatever their source) that are actually used by speakers of Tamil in normal everyday conversation. Moreover, certain words might be acceptable in the narrative parts of a work of fiction that can have no place in the fully formal style appropriate to a public address. Anyone with a sense of occasion must accept that nowadays a formal speech before an audience demands the use of what, for want of a better description, one must call " pure " Tamil. It is part of the greatness of C. N. A. as a creative user of Tamil that he has appreciated this, whilst at the same time acknowledging that there are contexts where this form style would be entirely inappropriate.

The versatility that these few pages have attempted to hint at is of a sort that most of us can only admire and envy. Yet they are only part of the story, for the history of the present government of Madras State shows that, in addition to all of this, Mr. Annadurai is an outstanding administrator and statesman. To achieve this standing and at the same time to make a contribution to one's literature (and C. N. A.'s speeches, as well as his more obviously " literary " endeavours, are an important contribution to Tamil literature) is very rare. There have, it is true, been examples in Britain of Prime Ministers making a name for themselves as writers too (one thinks of Benjamin Disreali and Winston Churchill among others) and there is the very special case of Jawaharlal Nehru in India. But such men are few and most commonly have mastered but one language.

(*Court* : Anna's 60th Birthday Souvenir)

POET BHARATHI'S SONG IN PRAISE OF TAMIL

The Tamil Nadu Government have been organising the birthday celebrations of national leaders to remember them with gratitude, and make the present generation to understand their dedication for the cause of the nation and our people. The birth day of Poet Bharathi is being celebrated during September all over the State by the District administration.

Poet Bharathi had intense love for his mother tongue. Hereunder is published his poem in praise of Tamil. In Latin and English literature we come across parallel to it. We pay our tributes to Poet Bharathi through the reproduction of this Poem.

Of all the tongues that I have sampled,
For sweetness Tamil's unexampled ;
But now become illit'rate mutes
Our lives are worse than those of brutes ;
Grown recreant t'out ancient trust
Our treasures in heap have gone to rust.

Tamil's mellifluous sounds
Must reach the world's utmost bounds,
If we're to lift our heads again,
Instead of wasting our time in vain.

* * * * *

Of all the bards that I've explored
None in the world are richer-ored
Than Kamban, Valluvar, Ilango'n,—
Immortal trinity—our own !
This is the truth unvarnished, plain,—
Free from all vainglorious strain.

Deaf, dumb and blind wretches we live,—
We can't our greatness e'er revive
So long as our native virile speech
Is not allowed much wider reach.
T'enrich, refine and modernise
Our tongue, new writers must arise ;
Translations too we must produce
From foreign classics for our use.
What boots it if we idly prate
Of our glorious past in our present state ?
If genius ' midst us ' gain takes birth.

Unless our hearts by truth are lighted,
Our speech with wings will not be flighted.
Self-purified we then may strive
Our arts and poetry t'revive.
Then our renascence in a flood.
Will lead us into a world of good.
The blind long failed in the ditch
Will be blessed with vision strange and rich,
And rise with the rise of Tamil strains
Chronicling our varied gains.
Like gods assuming human birth
We'd then live glorious on earth !

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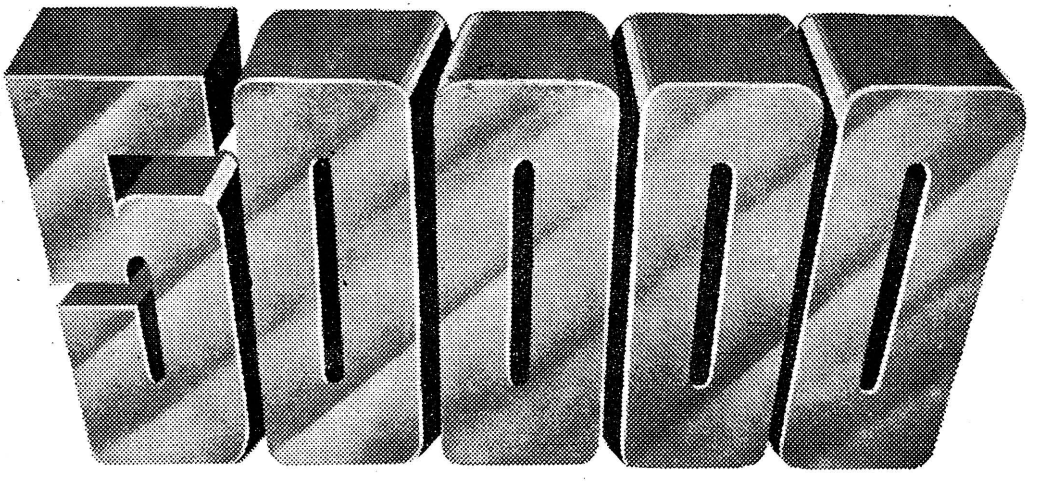

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PERIYAR
A Movement

N. D. SUNDARAVADIVELU,
Former Vice-Chancellor, Madras University.

Human beings are privileged to be born with the endowment of the intellectual faculty. It cannot however be claimed that human beings have used their intellect to further the cause of commonwealth. In one sense, history of mankind is a long record of the tyranny, cruelty, massacre and suffering inflicted by individual maglomaniacs or groups of barbarous people, on other fellow beings. Wars, conquests, enslavement, arson and plunder are obvious forms of organised cruelty practised throughout the ages in the guise of heroism and valour. Our own Indian society had, in the past, its full share of such bloodbaths, depravity and misery. We have, in addition given ourselves a subtler variety of human torture and misery and have successfully enforced it over centuries.

Under the obnoxious caste system, ninety seven percent of our Indian population is dubbed 'Sudras'—the slaves. Almost one fifth of our teeming millions are condemned from their birth to a life of seclusion, starvation, serfdom and poverty. Even cattle get a better treatment and live in a more spacious surroundings than our own brothern, the one time untouchables and Adi Dravidas and later day Harijans. Neither the foreign rulers, the British, who chose to eat from their hands nor the Swadeshi counterparts who did not hesitate to grease the palms of the so called Harijans during the elections, to snatch away their votes came forward to wage a battle royal to eradicate untouchability and to create a society of equals. The British took shelter under the Queen's proclamation of neutrality in religions affairs and excused themselves from their obligation to fellow human beings. The Swadeshi rulers belong mostly to the so-called higher castes and as such have a vested interest in protecting their hegemony. Though they shed repeatedly copious crocodile tears at the plight of our downtrodden people, nothing effective have been achieved towards the abolition of casteism.

Nagercoil Riot

Exactly one hundred and fifty years ago, a big riot broke out in the town of Nagercoil, then in the princely State of Travancore. The people became so riotous that the local police could not control it ; the military had to go to their rescue. What was the cause of such outburst ?

The then prevailing social custom did allow women of only certain castes to go about with their breasts covered. The so-called low caste women had to leave their breasts exposed to all and sundry, when they go out of their houses or huts. It so happened that by 1828, a number of women of 'low castes' not only became converts to christianity but also became educated. The hoary tradition of half nakedness became naturally repugnent to them. These christian women of Nagercoil petitioned to their gurns to intervene. The foreign missionaries caused a humble memorial, praying for the privilege of the women covering the upper portions of their bodies, to be sent to the Native Ruler. The ruler was graceful enough to concede but not fully. Only high caste women could wear a saree to cover their whole body. These 'Low' castes permitted to wear just a blouse when they went out. The educated women, immediately exercised their newly won right. They went into the thorough fares of Nagercoil as full dressed as caste women were. This provoked the wrath of the custodians of our traditions — the archaic animal in the form of human beings. The high caste Hindus attacked these women for the sin of refusal to expose their upper half. The latter resisted and rioting was the result.

Fight against untouchability

Absurdities and cruelties of these kind irked Swami Vivekananda, that great apostle of Hindu Renaissance to such an extent that he dubbed that part of Mother India, as a lunatic asylum.

It was given to Thanthai Periyar E. V. Ramaswamy to administer shock treatment to millions of us —the protectors of the evils of casteism.

The year 1924 witnessed the first organised revolt against untouchability. Till then, 'low caste' people could not walk through a certain street in Vaikom

E. V. Ramaswami was then the President of the Tamil Nadu Congress. His help was sought for. He himself went to Vaikom and took charge of the agitation. He was arrested and sentenced to a month's imprisonment. Periyar's wife Nagammai joined the agitation and continued it. Periyar on release from the prison, took up the agitation once again. He was sentenced to imprisonment for six months. But the agitation was successful. The right to walk through any public street was guaranteed to all citizens.

The Vaikom Hero, E. V. Ramaswami returned to Tamil Nadu victorious, with all glory. Periyar Ramaswami was not born to rest on his oars and ponder pleasantly over past glories.

With all the eloqunce at his command Mr. V. Ramaswamy, the mighty power house of Tamil Nadu Congress, was campaigning for over four years in favour of communal representation both in services and elective positions of public responsibility. The Tamil Nadu Congress did not adopt a realistic attitude towards this thorny problem. The leaders of public opinion knew only too well that inspite of all efforts

even on a massive scale, it will certainly take a few generations to create a casteless society in India. Ensuring meanwhile, a fair deal for all the broad sections of our society by adopting the principle of communal representation may not be an ideal solution but it certainly is a realistic approach, capable of generating a sense of fairplay and belonging in the minds of the toiling millions. When the State Conference of the Tamil Nadu Congress, which met in 1925 at Kancheepuram, would not even take up for consideration on merits, the principle of communal representation, Periyar Ramaswamy did what is expected of a honest leader of intellectual integrity. When he became convinced that the Congress had only a narrow outlook and it was not prepared to look beyond the horizon of political rights, Periyar left the Congress, in building which his part was indeed great.

To give up the Chairmanship of the Erode Municipal Council, the Presidentship of the Temple Administration Committee to give up ease and luxury was an act of great sacrifice on the part of E.V.R. With equal equanimity E.V.R. chose to throw over board the high reputation he enjoyed among the masess, when he walked out of the Congress.

His launching of the Self Respect Movement was the third glorious chapter of his long public service. This enlarged and due course engrossed in full his whole public agitational activities.

A Revolutionary

Periyar Ramaswami was a life long revolutionary. He struck severe blows on all the established thoughts and practices of our society. He spent sixty glorious years in relentlessly breaking the barriers of caste.

When Periyar entered public life, inter-dining was tabooed. Extremism in politics and child like conservatism in matters social, found the fashion of the day. Even among vegetarian students, the Brahmins would not and should not dine with non-Brahmin vegetarians. Railway catering sections had separate dining halls for Brahmins and Non-Brahmins. At every step, the Non-Brahmin was, then, reminded of his inferiority by birth. All these symbols of discrimination have since vanished in Tamil Nadu, thanks to the unprecedented and unparalleled, bloodless war that Periyar and his followers waged for over six decades.

Publicists have repeatedly distorted Periyar and his teachings. He has been presented time without number as a monster bullying a section of our society. What is never pointed out is the glorious fact that at no time in its long history was the self respect movement responsible for violence or bloodshed. No leader of such revolutionary ideology, other than Thanthai Periyar could have kept millions of his followers-most of the rustic under the strictest discipline keeping them away from violence of any kind even under great provocation.

How can one explain this, seeming inconsistency in Periyar ? To Periyar, precept and practice were synanimous. Equality of all human beings was the bed rock of his movement. He gave effect to this precept in a manner that none can even emulate. Even when a teen ager of the High School classes went to him, this great and noble person would stand up to receive him. He would do the same while taking leave of him.

Great Rationalist

As the embodiment of Rationalism, he will do his best to convince and persuade others but will never impose his ideas and convictions on others, even on those who are dependent on him.

No doubt Periyar was a renowned Atheist. This iconoclost, no doubt, indulged in the symbolic breaking of the image of Ganesha and burning of the picture of Rama. These were two telling demonstrations of his revolt and rebellion against our beliefs which sustain the crippling caste system. Neither during these demonstrations nor at any time did Tamil Nadu witness any ugly out-burst of violence against Brahmin caste and community, as long as Periyar Ramaswami was alive.

May I point out that Periyar Ramaswami, in his later days, was maintaining an orphanage in Periyar Maligai at Tiruchirappalli. Once when I called on Periyar, I listened with my own ears and with great surprise the prescribed Prayer song being sung by the inmates of the orphanage before the commencement of the day's work. Periyar explained that he did not want to exploit the helpless situation of the orphans to force down their throats his conviction namely Atheism.

From the top of the Himalayas, he would cry "There is no God" even if the whole world is up against him. But this mighty warrior had so much consideration for the individual personality of every orphan that he would not exploit the child even for his noble movement.

After his tour in the Soviet Union, in the early thirtees, Periyar became a confirmed socialist. He was a great and effective pioneer in carrying the gospel of socialism to the nooks and corners, to the homes and huts of Tamil Nadu.

In the last century Tamilians had to go abroad as coolies. In the present generation, thousands of Tamilians—men and women are working in advanced countries in professional positions. Even in Tamil Nadu, every hut can lay claim at least a matriculate if not a graduate. Was learning in our tradition ? Not all.

The wide spread awakening among the masses, the universal urge for more and more education among the weaker sections, the communal and religious harmony which form the hallmark of Tamil Nadu are the precious fruits of Periyar's revolutionary, all round and forthright fight against all forms of injustice and for a rationalist.

The thirst for education was created by Periyar by his ceaseless preachings over sixty years.

Society imbued with Humanism of the purest order. No wonder millions of downtrodden and neglected speak of Thanthai Periyar Ramaswami with admiration and adoration, respect and regard, enhilaration and enthusiasm and gratitude even if they are not the followers of Periyar's revolutionary programmes.

Whether it be the length public of service or the quality of service or the nature and intensity of service, Periyar stands peerless in the Hall of Glory.

May we prove worthy of him by eschewing feelings of superiority and inferiority between man and man, ensuring real equality between man and woman, doing our best to rebuild our society in such a manner as to guarantee full life and living to all and by discarding all outmoded ideas that stand in the way of establishing equality to the fullest sense of the word.

I have known Thiru Anna since July 1930. In those years, I used to see him from a distance. By about 1932, we started taking keen interest in the activities of Pachiyappa's College Union and Debating Societies. We came closer and closer as the years passed by. Thiru Anna and I passed the B.A. Hons. Degree Examination in 1934 and 1935 respectively.

He started taking increasingly active part in the affairs of the Justice Party during the mid-thirties. During the later thirties, I actually lost touch with him temporarily. By about the mid-forties, I established my personal contact and friendship with him. During the later forties, I appeared for him in a case or two and since fifties I have been his legal counsellor, both for him and the party he led.

I am happy to say I have built my friendship with him over a period of 38 years almost

My Beloved ANNA

K.N. MUDALIYAR,
Minister for Law

continuously. In fact I have heard him saying before his dear and near relations in the wake of his revered "thotha's" death, his friendship with me is of the longest duration. Friend ship is a sentiment which the heart alone knows. A deep abiding friendship is the very summit of human affection which evokes cordial exhilaration. Emerson says : "Our intellectual and active powers increase with our affection." I have had many hours and days and months when I have partaken of his affection with the result that our intellectual discussions on certain national and international questions were enlivened from time to time. Affection and friendship with him are indivisible. One cannot develop friendship with him by spending a long number of hours or days. He tries and tests your friendship in his inimitable manner. Friendship with him is never a newfangled development. It is built step by step and brick by brick and when he takes you as a friend, he grapples you to his soul with hoops of steel and defends you against the whole world.

Excellent Judge

He was an excellent judge of men. This singular trait or ability had enabled him to choose most of his lieutenants for the advancement of his party's work and for the accomplishment of his governmental administration. He can combine a quality of mildness of even meekness with a steel like resoluteness in stemming certain unhealthy or unseemly developments which fall within the compass of his stewardship.

He had the enviable quality of forgiveness. I am not certain that he forgot things, but his quality of forgiving is known to many erring members in the past and there are many inside and outside the party who have received a good measure of his virtue of his forgiveness.

He was a great thinker. During my meetings I have been considerably impressed by the logical steps of his thought processes and it is amazing to see his clear vision projected into the future and he would expound the likely or future consequences of any proposed or projected move for action in politics. He had the capacity to make the common masses of people think about the problems of the common man. It was Montesque who said—"In a free State it is not a matter of supreme consequence whether men think as a rule rightly or wrongly; the most important thing is that they think-without thought, popular government forces

men to think, it needs no other defence.... By making men think by reason of his speeches he was the greatest defender of popular government.

He was essentially self-reliant. In fact, his career illustrates it beyond any shadow of doubt. He was his own star. He believed in his own thought. He believed also that what is true in his private heart is true for all men. He spoke his latent conviction and it became the universal philosophy for his followers in this State. He once admitted that he was never subjected to the tyranny of either of the clock or the date.

His satire is incisive and penetrating and his invective is scorching; his repartee is devastating. His speeches both inside and outside the legislative forums are illustrative of these qualities as a public speaker. His debating skill is unmatched in the recent past and certainly never surpassed. His speeches in the Rajya Sabha had established his reputation as a great public speaker in the English language.

In personal meetings where no outsider was present, his wit and humour were scintillating. When one seeks guidance from him, his wisdom combined with his humility flows out. I have had occasions to burst into peals of laughter when he employed his wit to lighten the situations, however seemingly they were grave and solemn.

Love for opponents

He had another extraordinary virtue which is rarely discovered in this country. He had an abundant sense of appreciation of the very good points of his political opponents. I have known him paying generous tribute to the good qualities found in the political opponents. He had not even an iota of either personal rancuor, or illwill or hatred. In fact, he displayed biblical spirit when he loved his political opponents.

He expected whole-hearted loyalty from his friends and followers. A mask or pretence of it, however cleverly camouflage, was pierced through and laid bare by him. His innate talent for discovering true loyalty is remarkable. It is my rich experience that the more I gave of my personal loyalty, the more and more I have been fortunate enough to receive his loyalty in return in an ever increasing measure. Loyalty to him is a never-forgotten memory with him.

In discussing the various aspects of any new problem which needed solution or guidelines from him, I am bound to say that he would test each premise of the problem with a tremendous concentration and in the ultimate analysis either the solution or guidelines, obviously clear and categorical, would be given by him.

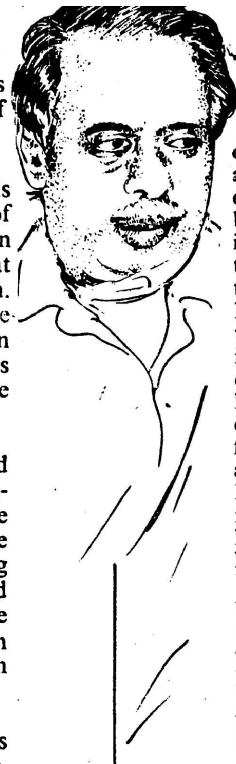
He had his unfailing and unerring touch with the pulse of his audiences. He could attune and modulate his speeches to the moods of his vast gatherings. He never believes in perorations as a culmination of his splendid orations. So often, he ended his speeches when the masses of his audiences were avid or hearing him more and more. The huge concourse of people gathered to hear him never tasted satiety while hearing him.

When he took office he summed up the philosophy of his life in the following words of Somerset Maugham, quoting Fray Luis deLeon —" The beauty of life, he says, is nothing but this that each should act in conformity with his nature and business ". I have no doubt that he had been living the spirit of his summation.

Removal of Corruption

Anna displayed crusading zeal for the total removal of corruption in all sectors of public life. Our Chief Minister is undoubtedly carrying out the task of the same crusade against corruption in all its forms and manifestations.

A clean Government and public life in the State of Tamil Nadu is a standing monument to the noble aspirations of my beloved Anna of revered memory.



THE UNIVERSITIES

The role of the University to-day is not cloistered and confined as in the past. Its function has been enlarged not in its fundamentals but in its domain. It has to take into account the common man-not to perpetuate his commonness, but to trim and train, guide and lead him, for he is called upon to-day to perform uncommon tasks. He is asked to do his duty as the citizen of a democracy — a task which kindles sweet hopes but which demands patience and perseverance. faith and confidence, faith in himself and in others and confidence in his inherent ability to shoulder the responsibilities. The common man has become the Ruler of the land— he holds his destiny in his own hand. Unlike in a bygone age, when rulers were born either in palaces or in mansions, to-day every hamlet and every hut has become the birth place of a potential ruler and the to-day, the responsibility of the Universities is to fashion bout of him an individual fitted and equipped for the task of making democracy fruitful and effective.

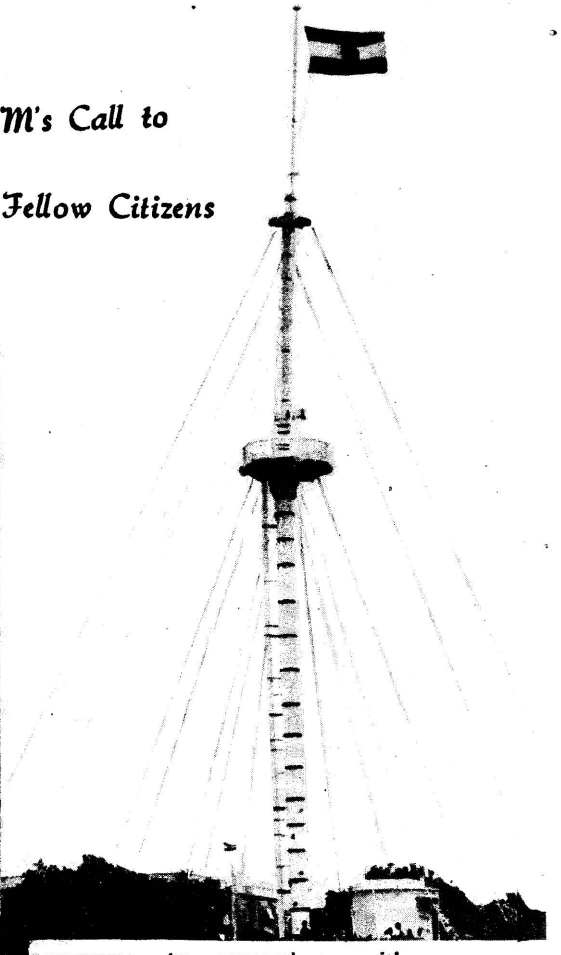
—ANNA

Independence Day

C. M's Call to his Fellow Citizens

In his message on the eve of the thirty first Independence day celebrations, Thiru M. G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, paying homage to the freedom fighters, said that he would continue to serve the poor and the needy to raise their standard of living and remove inequalities in the society and also make serious efforts to enrich the life of people in villages.

Mother tongue is the only medium that effectively serves as the vehicle of thought and one is at ease to express his feeling through his mother tongue.



Natural resources should not be harnessed just for individual welfare. Man is inter-dependent. Whatever is his intelligence and labour, others also share the benefits in the long run. If one realises this aspect fully it is obvious to him that personal freedom is a small part of the community freedom.

The freedom of the posterity is ensured by the sense of sacrifice of the whole society. It is the duty of every individual to give no room for discrimination on the basis of caste, religion, creed and wealth. It is the duty of everyone to remember, with reverence, Mahatma Gandhi who gave us freedom and the martyrs. People, particularly the politicians are to be pure in head and heart. This principle of purity in personal and public life is the basis of personal liberty. He appealed to his fellow citizens to take a vow to protect their mother-land.

After unfurling the National flag on the morning of 15th August, Thiru M. G. Ramachandran addressed the gathering from the ramparts of the Fort St'. George He appeal ed that people should strive hard to sink all differences, religious, communal or otherwise that divided them and pledge themselves to uphold the sovereignty of the nation.

He also wanted that people should eschew communal outlook and help the process of social integration. He appealed to students and workers and requested the students to concentrate in their studies. Workers should identify themselves with the industry and increase production.

N. S. KRISHNAN
A Peerless Humourist

N. S. Krishnan, popularly known as 'NSK', was a film actor of rare qualities who carved out a niche in Tamil film world and whose place as a humourist *par excellence* is yet to be replaced. Because N.S. Krishnan with his consort T.A. Mathuram, another character of heart appeal, was no mere actor of routine nature but a force in the films with a piercing wit and wisdom. His utter-ances, punning and rhetoric on the silver-screen made the audience roar with laughter. His character in all films made an indebible imprint in the minds of the young and old, men and women, educated and unlettered as well.

N.S. Krishnan was born in a family of little means in Kanya-kumari District. He had no formal schooling. He had to eke out his livelihood with great difficulties. As a child, Krishnan had great fascination for acting in dramas and, the then famous Drama Troupes "Sri Shanmugananda Nataka Company" and "Golden Sharadam-bal Company" provided opportunities to slake his thirst for appearing on the stage. The former run by well-known T.K. Shanmugham Brothers became his theatre to display his artistic talents and skill.

FIRST FILM

The first film in which N.S. Krishnan acted was "Menaka",produced in 1935 and his role of 'Shama Iyer' earned him name, and fame for the company. Krishnan had fore-sight and he visualised the eminent place that the films as mass enter-tainment and educational medium would occupy in future. He appear-ed in Sakthi Leela, Chandra Kantha and Vasantha Sena all this raised his status and his image as a cine artiste of exceptional calibre and proclivities.

As destiny would have it, T.A. Mathuram, featured in "*Vasantha Sena*" with N.S. Krishnan. The duet role that both played in this film and "*Tulsidas*" made a turn-ing point in the life of Krishnan. He married Mathuram and their marri-age was a pleasant combination. They have left an indelible imprint of their artistic skill in Tamil Films. Invariably all the films they starred together had carried a theme, to raise intellectual moral and ethical value of human life. N.S. Krishnan acted in over 70 films and mention may be made of "Dont't Laugh", "Sakuntala", "Asok Kumar" "Arya Mala", "Prithiv Raj", "Kannagi", "Sivakavi","Arunthathi", "Srivalli", "Chandraleka", "Krishna Bakthi" and "Nallathambi".

Fertile imagination

N.S. Krishnan was no mere actor. He was a man of fertile imagination and originality. His imagination, as displayed in movies moved the audience. He was popu-

lar among the people and his 'fans' increased leaps and bounds. He coined a certain phraseologies, pregnant with meaning and grace. His action reflected social ethos, and the social evils that the community suffered form. A regular reader of newspaper, N.S. Krishnan studied with avid interest of the cartoons and ancedotes of appeal which he projected in his roles in the films.

In the films Uthamaputhiran ad 'Salivahanan' he drove home the ideal of a 'casteless society', and the 'Kindanar Katha Kalakshepam', which raised the eye-brows of many orthodox did a propaganda for eschewing the practice of untouchability.

N. S. Krishnan was a rationalist, with reverance for Gandhi and his teachings. His "Gandhi Mahan Villuppattu" (story of Mahatma Gandhi) won him many a laurel; the story he naratted, the spirit of nationalism the dialogue infused still remain ever green in the minds of people. He raised a magnificient pillar in memory of Gandhiji in Nagercoil, his home town.. In his discourse in Moscow, N.S. Krishnan expounded the Gandhian economics, exposing the fallacy of mass production. His parable of bullock-cart and aeroplane provided a fabulum to the foreign audience.

N.S. Krishnan advocated Prohibition. His role in the film "*Nallathambi*", the story and dialogue of which was written by the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Anna, is a *magnum opus* of Krishnan. The drink evil and its disastrous impact on society and the havoc it plays on the youth-all this have been vividly pictured and the spectalors in the auditorium received the full message. A unique feature of the acting of N.S. Krishnan was that new ideas flew from him and the ideas, mostly social served the purpose.

N.S. Krishnan was fully aware of the ancient truth that the "mind is dyed by the colour of its thoughts, and films can give the right thoughts.

Chief Minister's tribute :

Thiru M.G. Ramachandran, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, addressing the 21st death anniversary meeting at Kalaivanar Arangam on August 30 said that N.S. Krishnan set a standard in public life; his life was a book of guidance for living a rich, honest life. N.S. Krishnan was a humanist blazing new trail in film and personal life.

N. S. KRISHNAN– THE KING OF HUMOUR

It is an open secret that Kalaivanar N. S. Krishnan was the king of humour. It is but proper that we are unveiling his portrait on the Pongal Day.

Thiru S. S. Vasan said : "An auspicious time is essential for anything". I think he did not say it with an orthodox outlook. Rather he said it in the good sense that we, the friends of N. S. Krishnan should have that opportune time to rule the country.

Apart from Kazhagamites, people of all parties, were closely associated with N. S. Krishnan.

Kalaivanar was not a mere artiste. Art was the medium he chose to reform society.

To-day is Pongal festival. It is the day of the toilers. N. S. Krishnan's victory is the victory of hard labour.

Humour was his characteristic talent. He made people laugh by his humour. At the same time he made them also think.

When I think of him, thoughts in hundreds and thousands rush in my mind. He was the greatest son of Tamil Nadu. We can be proud of him for ever.

Last speech made by Anna at Madras on 14-1-69 *while unveiling the statue of N. S. K.*

SOCIETY IS INDEBTED TO TEACHERS

The presentation of a wards to elementary school teachers at this function shows that society is indebted to them. Awards were presented to seventy teachers here. I congratulate the proud recipients of the awards. This function shows that Tamil Nadu felicitates teachers who give us the wealth of learning and who produce the future citizens of the country. The Tamilnadu Government also felicitates teachers who offer the country the treasure of knowledge and who produce learned men in spite of their poverty.

The teachers lead a life of so many worries, anxieties and disappointments. Though they are not given enough salaries and though houses are not constructed for them, there is no doubt at all that the Government values their culture. Indeed their task is a sacred one.

To say so, it does not mean that the Government considers that the state of poverty of the teachers must prolong. On the other hand it thinks that the teachers' status should be improved. The responsibility assumed by teachers will have the way for the growth of the (Tamil) society with an admirable culture. I bow to the teachers, who create an ideal society. Only if the beginning is clean, the middle and the end will also be clean and good.

The elementary education is the basis of all education. As the letter A is the first of all alphabets, so elementary education is the foundation in the field of education. Teachers have a share in the responsibility of making the society cheerful. The teachers who have received the awards from the Governor along with his congratulations have an imperishable wealth.

The pedestrian looking at a man, strolling in the upper floor of his three-storeyed house will say : "I know, this man has accumulated riches". But can anybody find fault with the wealth that teachers possess ? When we see and think of the awards received by teachers from the graceful hands of the Governor, it fills us with joy and exemplifies the greatness of their duty because their wealth is blameless and uncensurable.

For generations to come, your near kinsmen will feel proud of your achievements, and will consider themselves proud members of the award-winning family. I convey my congratulations and respects to teachers who are engaged in such a holy task.

Speech delivered at Rajaji Hall on 27-3-67 *in the Seventh Award Presentation function of Elementary School Teachers.*

Periyar's Mission

A. P. JANARTHANAM, M. P.

In 1934, as a boy of 13, I first heard Periyar thunder against superstition. The flowing beard, the chocolate shawl, the koninе face, the clear, singing voice, all made a deep impression on me. From that day, I have been his staunch follower.

I have accompanied him on his tours. In a largely illiterate country, the spoken word is more effective. Periyar, for over 50 years, toured the nook and corner of Tamilnadu and roused the masses from their centuries—old slumber.

With unparalleled courage, with a foresight remarkable for its clarity, with patience, perseverance, he was the gadfly, the lash laid across the back of his generation.

He shocked people to reason. By his blunt, frank, straight, fearless exposure of sanctimonious humbug, he frickled the bubbles of myths and illusions.

He did not spare the Gods of the Hindu pantheon. He roundly condemned rituals. He opposed monopoly by birth. He championed the cause of the dumb millions who lost their reason, self-respect, culture, civilisation and vision for thousands of years.

Socratic Way

He went to the root of the problems. He questioned every thing in the Socratic way. He put every belief to the touchstone and reason.

He was never afraid to be the unpopular. His meetings, at many places, were disturbed. Missiles from stones to chappals were hurled. Heckling, booing, cat-calls and cacophony of dust and din did not stop his niagaral eloquence. He rose with the storm. In a few years, he conquered the hearts of the people. Those who opposed slowly got converted.

A New Era

Periyar's self-respect movement sought to destroy the old order. He urged his comrades to become builders of a new era. He spread seminal ideas through his journals. He predicted the arrival of the test tube baby. He roused the Tamils to great heights.

A grateful people are now celebrating his centenary. He will be honoured as a great thinker like Socrates. Periyar's speeches were direct, straight. He spoke to the hearts. He did not speak to mesmerise. There was no effort at embellishment. He did not use figures of speech. He was earthy, simple !

He was not burdened with pedantry. He did not use quotations. Life was his book. The plight of his people roused him to righteous indignation. For over three hours he held the audiences spell-bound The fall of a stone on the platform was signal enough for this Erode engine to pick up speed.

Birth Control

Thousands of marriages were consummated by him. He was a fierce upholder of the rights of women. He preached birth-control even in the late twenties. His thoughts are nuggets of reason which are strikingly original and can he studied with interest.

His bugle calls to action, have roused the youth. They will continue to guide, inspire and elevate people for thousands of years. His disciples, brought up in his strict spartan school, became chief ministers, ministers and legislators. **Dr. Anna was his most brilliant, mature, erudite disciple. To the last, Anna was brimming with gratitude to the Grand Old Man.**

The Tamil Nadu Government, headed by Puratchi Thalaivar M. G. R. has won the admiration of the Tamils by celebrating the centenary of Periyar for the full year.

The greatest honour Periyar would get is when his people see the light of reason and follow his precepts.

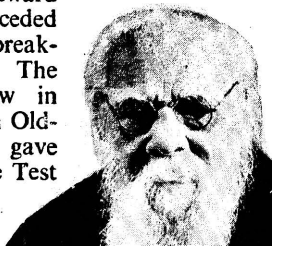
Long live Periyar !

TEST TUBE BABY

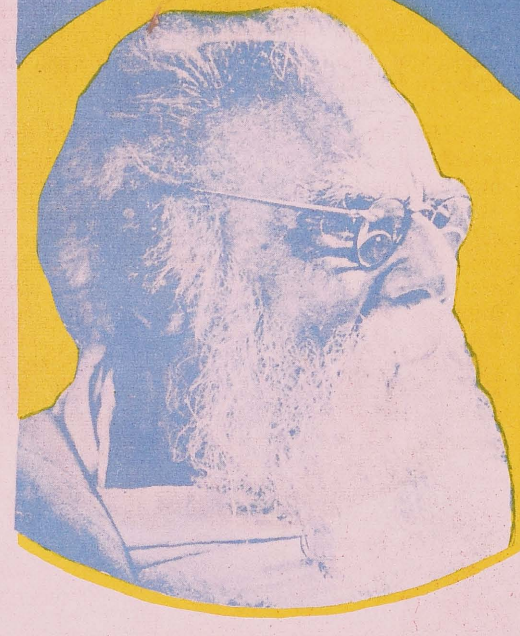
PERIYAR'S PROPHESY

About forty years ago, Periyar E. V. Ramasami anticipated that medical science would make advances in biological studies and child birth might take place without actual cohabitation. Periyar said Pregnancy need not necessarily be through the normal sexual relations. To obtain healthy, intelligent, ruddy and handsome children, selected stud-bull-like men would be reared up, and their semen will be injected into the ovaries of women to produce good children. Sexual inter - course may be avoided.

The prophesy of Periyar is appreciated today. Dr. Edward and Dr. Steptoes have succeded in this major scientific breakthrough in July this year. The implanted 'embryo' grew in the womb of Lucy Brown in Oldhams of England and she gave birth to a normal baby, the Test Tube Baby.



CASTELESS SOCIAL SYSTEM IS THE FOUNDATION OF A SOCIALIST SOCIETY



Feeling of high and low birth adds fuel to the ever — increasing communal conflict in our country. So, this feeling should be destroyed and real knowledge that all human beings are one should grow and gain strength among people.

—THANTHAI PERIYAR

Caste is the first force that creates discrimination among the people in this country. It is a venom mixed in the blood of our people. It is a system that has paralysed the mind. Hence, Caste should be annihilated first if we are to usher in a casteless society based on equality and socialism.

—PERARIGNAR ANNA

LET US ALL REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL OF AN EGALITARIAN SOCIAL ORDER

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PERIYAR CENTENARY

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